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Little Lives
of
Great Men

CROMWELL

ENGLAND'S UNCROWNED KING

by

Esse V. Hathaway



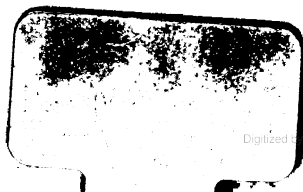
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LITTLE LIVES OF GREAT MEN





OLIVER CROMWELL

*From a painting by Charles Cooper, at Sidney Sussex College,
Cambridge.*

Little Lives of Great Men

CROMWELL
ENGLAND'S UNCROWNED
KING

By
ESSE V. HATHAWAY
Instructor in English in the Des Moines
(Iowa) High School

WITH
4 FULL-PAGE PORTRAITS,
FROM PAINTINGS; AND 51
TEXT ILLUSTRATIONS BY
CARLE MICHEL BOOG



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To

GRACE M. PACKARD

*who during a summer of delightful
companionship tramped with me
the towns and shires of old England
made famous and full of charm through
association with Oliver Cromwell.*



INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

THE beneficent reaction of hero-worship on the character of the boy-idolator begins when first the lad realizes that his ideal of manhood has been subject to all the average boy's handicaps, has been "in all points tempted" as he is, but has risen superior to the multitude of life's physical, mental, and moral difficulties. At that moment is born the inspiration, followed by the earnest purpose, "to go and do likewise." The loftier his model, the higher his aim, the more strongly is the lad vitalized, energized, uplifted.

On the other hand nothing can so deaden a boy's ambition, as the belief that the object of his admiration lived and fought and achieved in an atmosphere unshared by him, and possessed abilities and opportunities he is denied. With such a belief the youth stumbles through year after year of his school career with no realization of the joy of building stone by stone the foundation of an impregnable life-structure. To him remain unseen the possibilities which may be grasped and opened up through the study of happily written biographies of world-toilers who had blood and brawn and fire, who being dead yet speak because of the inherent power of a commanding personality, a mighty will, and a never dying spirit. Why is this so?

Primarily, because the majority of biographies have been written for mature minds, and deal with those aspects of their subject's public career which appeal only to adult students. They carry no heart message to the boys of fifth or sixth grade, for they are beyond

their comprehension both in style and matter. Biography exerts no permanent influence for good on the child unless by intimacy with and understanding of boy nature, it grips him so firmly and implants a tenacity of purpose so strong that he is undaunted in endeavor to emulate and even to outstrip his ideal.

To accomplish this end is the primary object of the "Little Lives of Great Men." It is their aim so to bring biography to the plane of understanding of the child at his most impressionable age, that there will follow appreciation not only of the outstanding accomplishments of these great men but of the impulses and principles which are the guiding and controlling factors in the lives of all the great and good.

The fifth and sixth grades are counted the Heroic Period in the lives of school boys and girls, and since psychology, pedagogics, and child study have made apparent this fact, those who have at heart the highest welfare of the young are endeavoring so to shape school book and curriculum that lasting results may be obtained through the child's natural interests. The authors of this series hope these little books will render some service to the cause of education by appealing to the higher nature and molding hitherto undeveloped faculties in the pupils of the middle grades. By awakening their perceptions, stimulating their instinct for individuality, and quickening their efforts to attain unto the measure of the stature of the high examples of manhood outlined therein, the "Little Lives of Great Men" are calculated to drive telling blows deep into the inner consciousness of the children, and effectually to rouse into vigorous action forces that may yet be felt around the world.

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OLIVER CROMWELL AND HIS SON
From a painting by Robert Walker, at Althorp.

CROMWELL

ENGLAND'S UNCROWNED KING

CHAPTER I

Troubles of a Small Lad

WITH a strong swing the boy wheeled a stick through the air and, bringing it back with force and bitterness, struck a beautiful pink rose from a bush by the path. The lad kicked the flower to one side and went grinding his sturdy feet down the road to the gate. Back of him the Hall of Hinchinbrook reared its stately walls toward the summer sky. To his left lay the park, with acres of magnificent beech trees and lawns, made green by centuries of English rain and sun. As far as his heavy eyes could see, the land was given up to the mere pleasure of one man.

It was not that Oliver Cromwell wanted the pink rose, or the pleasure park, or

that he cared to have a place in the gay parties at Hinchinbrook; such things were all very well for his Uncle Oliver, who lived at the Hall, as they had been for his grandfather, Sir Henry Cromwell, who had lived so gayly and spent money so freely



Hinchinbrook.

that he had earned the name of the "Golden Knight." But Oliver's father, Robert Cromwell, although a younger son of the brilliant Golden Knight, was of an entirely different sort. A man of deeply religious principles, he had stripped life of all useless holidays and lived only to perform the duties of daily living. It is hard to say what he would have done with Hinchinbrook had he been the eldest son. But he received the limited portion of a younger son, and after his marriage with

Elizabeth Steward, a girl noted for her force of character and stately bearing, took up his stern manner of living on a small estate in the village of Huntingdon.

Fortunately for everybody, the small Oliver had inherited none of the tastes of his grandfather and uncle, but, sober and practical, followed his father's life without complaint. But there were days, even as far back as 1609, when things went crooked, and to-day was one of these in this boy's life. He didn't want to go to school; in fact, it was not often that he did, and he had loitered on an errand to the Hall as long as he dared. His clumsy, boyish manner, full of suppressed energy, had annoyed Sir Oliver until he had aroused the boy's anger by speaking sharply of his awkwardness. The dull, red anger brought on by this reproof was still burning in his cheeks as he beheaded the pink rose and thumped his heavy feet down the country road to the village.

It isn't likely the ten-year-old lad thought the matter out clearly, but he

must have had a dim feeling that things in this world were divided in an uneven manner. Why should Sir Oliver have acres and acres of beautiful land to use just for pleasure, while his father had such a tiny tract to supply all the needs of his large family?

And yet it was by no means an unattractive spot upon which the boy opened the gate in the high wall. A few feet from the entrance stood a yellow brick house, large and substantial looking. To the left of the entrance a door opened on a fair-sized lawn of velvety smoothness. Beyond that rose a close-clipped hedge, over the top of which tall spikes of red and blue flowers nodded. Behind these the vegetable and fruit gardens grew and flourished, as only English gardens can grow and flourish.

Even the small, stubborn Oliver knew he did not dare linger about the house when schooltime came, so, with ill grace, he clattered out after delivering Sir Oliver's message to his father. With a natural

dislike of the quiet and confinement of school, the boy had the added grievance of continual trouble with his masters. Full of action, with a temper that led him to use his fists, and caring to study only when interested, he was a puzzle and an annoyance to those over him. Just recently he had been removed from the care of his first master, Doctor Long, and had entered the free grammar school of the village. Here, at least, he had a larger field for his active nature, and for a time his interest in school life increased.

This morning, however, his eyes had within them a look of sullen uneasiness that boded ill for his studies. The look was not unusual with the boy, and his teachers and parents had learned to let him alone when it appeared, for he was likely to fly into a terrible rage if aroused from his attempt to settle the questions troubling him.

Happily, no one interfered with him as he came along the street from his home and turned into the market place, a square

in the center of the village. To the left of the square stood the quaint, one-roomed grammar school, the scene of his early troubles. A taste for plain, simple things, which the boy had inherited from



The grammar school at Huntingdon.

his father, and which his training had increased, found satisfaction in this building of solid, gray stone. In spite of his morning's discontent, he felt a little less sullen as he drew near the church-like front of the school and passed under the perfect arch of the Norman doorway. The room which he entered was as severe

in its plainness as the outer stone walls. The oak ceiling was arched to the roof, with heavy brown beams supporting it. Latticed windows, placed high in the wainscoted walls and sunk deep within Norman arches, threw a dim light over the long benches.

The boy liked the room as well as he could like anything connected with school life, but he liked better to think of the stories connected with the room. The school had been founded centuries before by one of his heroes, David, earl of Huntingdon, who afterward became king of Scotland. At this foundation there had been a provision made for taking care of poor people and weary wayfarers who sought shelter.

Slowly the gleam of anger died out of the boy's eyes as he sat on his long bench and let these stories come back to him. His Uncle Oliver, with his exquisite tastes and surroundings of luxury, and his impatience toward his small nephew's awkward slowness, seemed less important.

The thought passed dimly through his mind that Sir Oliver, with his lace frills, gold snuffbox, and scented handkerchief, would be as much out of place here as he, with his coarse clothing, heavy shoes, and ugly temper, had been at Hinchinbrook. At least there was comfort in that, and the small Oliver breathed a sigh of relief.

CHAPTER II

College Days at Old Cambridge

THE April rain sifted down from the gray sky, adding its gloom to the already heavy heart of the homesick boy who stood at the window, looking up the street of the old university town. It did not seem possible that two days had passed since he had left the old, yellow brick house at Huntingdon, full of all the eagerness of his immense energy for the new life opening for him at Cambridge. Until then his whole life had been made up of the villagers, the steady grind of the grammar school, and the plain, strict duties of home. To be sure, there had been occasional bursts of gayety from the great outer world when the Hall of Hinchinbrook had been filled with brilliant Londoners, and Sir Oliver had included his brother's family among the guests in the lavish entertainments.

While the boy had great curiosity concerning London and the court, yet his pleasure had never been what it should have been at such times. There had always been the same story as that of the summer



Oliver stood at the window, looking up the street of the old university town.

day years before—the story of the uncle's impatience with the boy's awkward heaviness, and the nephew's knowledge of that impatience driving him into a fierce rage. With his intense interest in people and in everything which had to do with active life, this standing on the outside, where he could just catch glimpses, but not know the lives of these court visitors, had only increased the boy's great longing to get out into their world.

This longing had grown still stronger as the time drew near for the boy to enter

college. Robert Cromwell had but a small income to spread over the needs of his family, yet he was an English gentleman, and his only living son must have the education belonging to his class. Oliver had always known this, and had looked forward to his college life as his opportunity to find out for himself just what made the difference between his days and those of the gay visitors at Hinchinbrook.

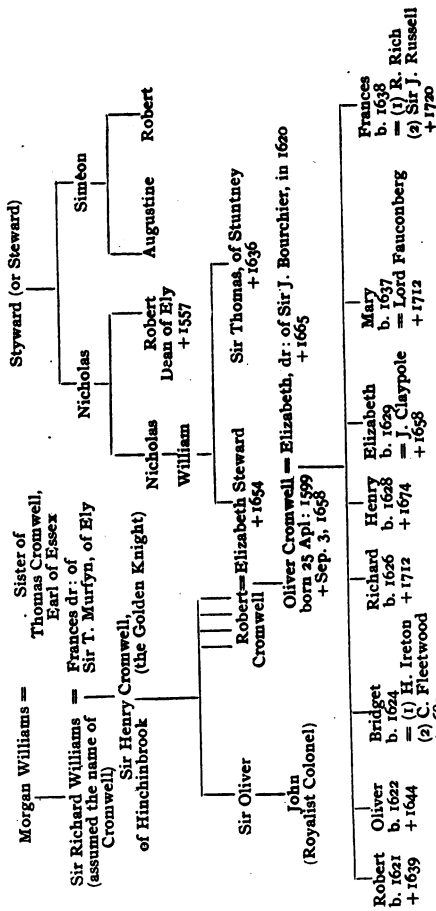
Huntingdon is not far from Cambridge, but to the boy looking out from the rain-bespattered window it seemed an endless distance. The experiences of the last two days had already placed those of his earlier life at a greater distance than time could measure. It was not that his entrance into college had been different from that of the other boys, but Oliver Cromwell was not given to talking over his feelings and thoughts, so he had only his own view of these days—the extravagant, excited view of a village boy whose whole life had bent toward the outer

world and who now found himself on his way to understand it.

Until this morning Oliver had had no time to think of home. The first day there had been the college officials to meet and his entrance to arrange for. He remembered with much satisfaction the appearance of the large book, with the following record, written in Latin, heading the page:

“Oliver Cromwell from Huntingdon admitted Fellow Commoner, 23d April, 1616; Tutor, Mr. Richard Howlet.”

The second morning he had tumbled his belongings into their places with that lost feeling a boy has when he first attempts to keep his own room in order. But an April day in England, when the sun shines on the budding hawthorn hedge, is not a day to be spent indoors. When that sun shines on the hedges, lawns, and glorious trees of old Cambridge, no boy can remain in his room. Yesterday had been perfect in its April beauty, and Oliver Cromwell's active nature had led him



Courtesy of E. G. Puchard, D. D., of Ely.

The Cromwell family.

untiringly through the streets of the town. He had seen the market place in the center of the village, where butter was being sold in yard strips to the students. From there he had gone to the queer old livery stable run by Thomas Hobson, and had had his interest aroused by the man's queer method of renting his horses. There they were, swift and slow, fat and lean, old and young, to be let as their turn came, regardless of whether the customers were rich or poor, whether the demand was for speed or for strength; it was Hobson's choice, not theirs. With a keen sense of the man's justice to man and beast, a justice which he himself had begun to demand, the boy had gone on down the street past King's College. Here he had stopped to stare at the statue of King Henry VIII over the entrance.

More than half a century before, on a glorious May Day at Westminster, Oliver Cromwell's great-grandfather had overthrown the king's challengers of France, Flanders, Spain, and Scotland. For that knightly triumph King Henry had given

the victor a diamond ring from his finger, and bade him ever after bear one in the Cromwell family crest. The boy did not care for the fame which his grandfather and uncle had won through their gorgeous entertainment at Hinchinbrook, but his heart never failed to stir with gratified pride as he heard the story of his great-grandfather's bravery and skill at the May Day tournament. The king's statue made the story very real to him that morning, and he straightened his shoulders in pride as he met a group of jostling, noisy students. The memory of the story stayed with him as he followed the Cam River, winding its clear way back of the college buildings, and filled the hours of the day with dreams not only of victories won by the old knight, but of possible victories to be won in the future by this Huntingdon lad.

On this dark morning, however, the third day in the college town, he could gain no satisfaction from any such visions. The ceaseless drip, drip of the rain; the

fact that work must soon begin in earnest, that work which might attract him and again might not, all filled him with gloom. To add to the blackness which possessed his boy's soul, it was the twenty-fifth of April and his seventeenth birthday. In spite of his boyish shame over the feeling, he was homesick. There had never been many expressions of love in the yellow house at Huntingdon, but the stern training of the father and the unselfish, steady love of the mother kept the boy from ever feeling that he was alone or uncared for. He himself was of a deeply affectionate nature, but the influence of his home, as well as his own natural disposition, had always kept him from expressing his love freely. Now he realized for the first time, probably, what his home had been to him. Even at this time, however, there was no sign of his deep feeling. His rather dull eyes looked out from under his heavy lids steadily, his great lower jaw showed no sign of weakening, and his stalky figure stood slouching by the

window without a single trace of strained muscle in all its sluggish length.

All at once the lines straightened, a



"Around the corner came a crowd of yelling, clattering boys."

slight gleam came into his eyes, and he leaned quickly forward as a shout came echoing down the deserted street. Around the corner rushed a crowd of yelling, clattering boys, swinging cudgels, knocking, pushing, laughing, and singing. With one

leap for his cap and another for his cudgel, Oliver dashed for the stairs, and was down and out and in the midst of the crowd before it had raced past the gateway of Sidney Sussex College. The remembrance of home, Huntingdon, Hinchinbrook, all were forgotten now in the game of cudgels, a game in which he had always been a skilled leader and sure victor.

His skill now served him a good turn. Good material for the football field, for the cricket match, as well as for the game of cudgels, was no more to be despised in the seventeenth century than to-day. Such muscle, such boundless energy, such power of leadership as Oliver Cromwell showed, left no question as to his position in the college athletics.

If he had displayed the same energetic interest in his studies as in his outdoor life, his class record might have stood higher. The same irregular habits that had so tried the patience of his grammar-school teachers continued at Sidney Sussex. If he became interested in a subject

he would study; if not, he turned his back on it with indifference. History was his favorite study, especially the part that had to do with the management of armies or the ruling of a nation, and his eagerness in following these lines was as well known as his skill in football. The wholesale disgust the small boy at Huntingdon had had for beauty in pictures and poetry, and for great learning, gradually passed away. He never cared to study art or literature, but he changed his opinion of those who did.

Probably the foundations laid for these new interests might have developed Oliver Cromwell into an entirely different man had he been able to complete his college work. Only a year, though, was given him, and then came the message that put an end to it all and turned the college boy of eighteen into a man with heavy responsibilities. The stern Puritan father, Robert Cromwell, died in 1617, leaving his wife with a family of seven children. Oliver left Cambridge to see his father laid to rest in the old parish church of St. Mary's, at

Huntingdon. The expense of the boy's college life was too great for the slender estate, and he was forced to give up Cambridge to help his mother care for the family.



*Huntingdon Market Hill.
The church where the Cromwell family records are kept.*

There is a story told of a few months of law school in London, but the proof of that is wanting. If he had this it completed his education, so far as attendance at school was concerned. Yet the years that followed Cambridge were not lost, by any means, for in them Oliver Cromwell rounded out the practical side of his education and proved his ability to meet the cares of daily life.

CHAPTER III

Early Promises of Power

THREE years had passed, years in which Oliver Cromwell and his mother had stood close together to turn the scanty products of their few acres into food and clothing for the large family. The struggle had not been an easy one; neither had it been without a certain pleasure to the two. The boy had inherited not only the powerful mouth and chin of his mother, but with them her strength and force. Unfortunately for him, he never had the happy love for the bright things of life which his mother possessed. She recognized his lack of this characteristic, and with her own cheerfulness helped him through many dark days not only in those early years, but throughout his life.

To-day the old house had been cleaned and polished until the August sun gleamed bright from windowpane and cobblestone.

The lawn had been swept, the vines on the high wall had been trimmed, and every inch of the estate put in the most careful order. And all this the mother had done with a glad heart, for this was the day her son was to bring his young wife home from London. The joy in her heart was not merely because of her son's happiness, but there was joy also because of satisfaction in her own work. In spite of her husband's having had the unfortunate place of younger son in the Cromwell family, in spite of poverty, sickness, and death, she had brought her seven children to lives of fair ease, and kept the family position one of influence and respect. Those of her daughters who were unmarried when their father died had married within their own circle. But although this fact proved her success, her son's marriage was a still greater credit to her. Elizabeth Bouchier, Oliver Cromwell's wife, was the daughter of Sir James Bouchier, a London fur dealer of some wealth. But the lovable character and

ready sympathy of the girl, together with her shrewd good sense, were far more in the mother's mind to-day than wealth or social position. These qualities were the ones most necessary to influence her son's life.

Just what that life was to be was often a troublesome question in Elizabeth Cromwell's mind. She recognized her own will power in her son, and, in addition a tremendous force all his own, which had grown stronger in the years of their work together. That he was looked upon as a rather stolid, immovable young man, she also knew. But she saw what others did not—a suppressed energy, a love of thoroughness, a power to bring about what he desired, and under and over all of this, an affectionate and religious nature of startling fire and strength. Whether an occasion would ever arise to bring these qualities into public view she did not know. If such an occasion should come she shrank from the result, for she felt there was within her son an immeasurable

power for action that would make his name either blessed or cursed of men.

Because of this feeling and because of the deep love and sympathy between



Cromwell's house at Huntingdon.

herself and her only son, she was quite content to have her home with him and his wife in the old house at Huntingdon. And this content, her satisfaction in the successful outcome of difficult days, together with the share she felt in her son's happiness, had made her preparations for the home-coming one of undisturbed joy.

The days that followed the wedding passed into months, and the months into years, with but little change in

the outward life of Oliver Cromwell. A change in his character, however, was taking place; a change which his mother watched with somewhat of dread. All of his life, Robert Cromwell's son had been trained to the strictest attention to religious duties. But a serious, almost despondent side to his character, together with a power for deep feeling, had now led him into a conflict unknown to most young men of his time.

Just what brought about the trouble it is hard to say; but for some reason he passed through months of doubt and of questioning the faith of his father. Coming out victorious in his struggle to believe all that had been taught him, he was immediately plunged into days of repentance for his sins. With his mother's influence and the position he held in the town where he lived it is certain he could never have been very deep in wickedness, but he had become so sensitive in his months of deep thought and study of religion that he put himself through a thorough course of cleansing

and purifying to rid himself of what he considered his deadly sins. Throughout this time he was sullen and irritable, and must often have put the sympathy and common sense of his wife and mother to a severe test. The effect of these unhappy months on his later life can scarcely be counted, however. From that time on, all of his power of thought and feeling, strengthened by the struggle through which he had passed victoriously, was turned in the direction of the church and against those who would lessen its purity and simplicity. Among these he classed all Roman Catholics, and looked with but little more favor on the Church of England.

While this struggle was going on within his soul, Cromwell was growing steadily in the favor of his townspeople. He lived a quiet, uneventful life, working on his farm, but never neglecting the duties of a good citizen. Eight years after his marriage, in 1628, the people of Huntingdon showed the respect they felt for him,

and the faith they had in his ability, by sending him to look after their interests in Parliament.

Although the young member had some



The Houses of Parliament.

influential friends in London at that time, who could and would have made him prominent, his first term in serving his country left him still unknown to the public. In fact, there is no record of his taking any part in the discussions that arose during the first winter of his term in Parliament. Clad in ill-fitting homespun clothes which hung loosely on his bulky frame, walking with a shambling gait,

meeting people with an abrupt manner utterly lacking in grace, he presented the same faults of manner and dress that had so offended his Uncle Oliver at the gay parties at Hinchinbrook.

There must have been much, however, to fill the mind of Oliver Cromwell in that first year of public life, and it cannot be said that he was an unworthy or stupid member of the House of Commons. In spite of his heavy, unexpressive face, he was laying in a store of information and forming opinions that later were to be a mighty force against tyranny and oppression. No better time could have been given him for this study, for England was stirred from border to border by discontent and threatened rebellion.

The king of England at this time, Charles I of the house of Stuart, was a man of charming personal appearance; a man that had much in him to win his way to the hearts of his people, but who had not the qualities to hold his place when once he had won it. Shifting, selfish,

unkingly in his treatment of the English people, still he might have held his own had it not been for two things. His father, James I, had weakened the trust of his subjects in the Stuart kings by the very same characteristics which they saw appear in Charles. The second thing against which the king had to fight was far more serious than his and his father's unfaithfulness. The Puritan party, which had originated among men who objected to the elaborate ceremonies of the Church of England, had been growing steadily for half a century until now its power began to threaten even that of King Charles himself.



Charles I. From a portrait by Sir Anthony Vandyke after a painting by Sir Peter Lely.

It was into this struggle that the quiet farmer of Huntingdon found himself plunged. As the son of Robert Cromwell;

as a man who, because of his parentage and ancestry, stood where he could study both the king's and the people's party; and above all, as one who had passed



Cromwell making his first speech in Parliament.

through a great religious struggle, Oliver Cromwell must have taken an intense interest in the workings of this Parliament. He had always felt more deeply on religious than on political questions, and during the second winter of his term his long silence was broken by a blunt, angry speech against the extreme ceremonies of the church. This was the first and last time his voice was heard in that

Parliament. In the spring of that same year all attempt at peace between king and Parliament was abandoned, and the latter was dissolved, not to meet again for eleven years.

CHAPTER IV

Six Years as a Farmer Citizen

PERHAPS it was a vague feeling of discontent over the affairs of the nation, perhaps it was a keener knowledge of public affairs gained through mingling with brilliant men, that led Oliver Cromwell to study so carefully a new charter granted to Huntingdon in the summer of 1630. Whatever the reason, the result was most startling. In his early school days he had been noted for his sudden bursts of rage, when he would fly at some school-mate and beat him into hurried and complete submission. Now his townspeople saw the same characteristic brought forth in the grown man. Although the beating was not from the heavy fists of Oliver Cromwell, it was nevertheless as successful and very nearly as terrifying. In studying the new charter he had found that the rights of the poor people to certain

pasture lands were taken from them and given into the hands of the town officers. It was quite possible for these officers to



"Cromwell rushed upon the new mayor with savage abruptness."

work injustice to these poor people, and that possibility aroused Oliver Cromwell's wrath to white heat. With utter disregard for the authority or rank of the gentleman, Cromwell rushed upon the new mayor with savage abruptness, and told him in plain terms that the new charter was unjust and illegal. The attack was so threatening, so full of rebellion, that the angry man was ordered to appear

before the town council. At this meeting he stated his case with such clearness that his objections were accepted and the poor people were again given the rights that had been theirs for centuries.

With the generosity and justice of a great mind, Cromwell no sooner proved that he was in the right than he turned to the mayor with blunt honesty and apologized for the undignified attack he had made upon him.

Although this matter was settled so peaceably, it is quite probable that it had something to do with Cromwell's decision to leave his home in Huntingdon. It is also possible that his pent-up energy found no outlet in the old town, even in his daily work, as the farming of his few acres could not have been a heavy task. The income from the crops was but scanty, also, and the family of Oliver Cromwell was beginning to demand more than he could raise at Huntingdon. There was Robert, the eldest son, bearing the name of his stern grandfather; Oliver, with his

father's name; then Bridget, Richard, Henry, and two-year-old Elizabeth; six active boys and girls, who often made the winding streets of Huntingdon echo with



The steep, queer bridge over the Ouse, and the town of St. Ives.

their noise, in spite of the strict Puritan rule of the father and mother.

One morning in May this bubbling lot of children was bundled into the stage-coach, and, with the waving of many hands to the grandmother standing in the gateway, the family rolled off between the green hedgerows, along the river Ouse, toward the new home five miles away. They looked with curiosity at the steep, queer bridge over which they rode into the little town of St. Ives. About a mile beyond the village lay the farm Cromwell had bought. Their way was over a

country of bogs and marshes, a country which, in spite of its forbidding looks and lack of good farming soil, had been dear to generations of Cromwells. To drain the widespreading miles of the Fenland, as the district was and still is called, to turn the waste waters into the river Ouse and make the low-lying acres fertile and productive, had always been the dream of this family. The desire was stronger in the heart of Oliver Cromwell than in the hearts of those before him, for he felt within himself the power to make the dream come true. The task was far too large for one man, but the matter had been brought before Parliament by the gay old Cavalier grandfather and some scattered work done years before. If ever the trouble between king and Parliament could be adjusted, Oliver Cromwell intended to push the draining of the fens to a successful end.

He certainly must have felt the necessity for this work more strongly than ever before in connection with his farm at St. Ives.

The Ouse dragged its shallow, sluggish water through the land, the soggy acres wasting away into its marshy banks, where the willows hung drooping over the dark water. Even by giving the land up entirely to grazing, the farm was not a success. It is barely possible that the newcomer might have made more of a success of it if his interests and energies had not been in another direction. As it was, Oliver Cromwell made the farm at St. Ives well-nigh a failure. Still the family lived on here for five years, the children going back to Huntingdon to visit the grandmother and to see the little sister Mary christened in the old church. Oliver Cromwell, in the meantime, occupied himself with his cattle, with the interests of his neighbors, and with the duties of a citizen in the small, straggling town of St. Ives. This village, with its cattle market on week days, and the services in the old church, whose windows looked straight into the sullen Ouse, furnished all there was of public life to the energetic farmer. That

Cromwell's influence was for good in the new home is shown by a letter he wrote to a friend, thanking him for sending a certain lecturer to his country.



Cromwell's barn at St. Ives.

“Building of hospitals,” he said, “provides for men’s bodies; to build material temples is judged a work of piety; but they that . . . build up spiritual temples, they are the men truly charitable, truly pious.”

The fifth year at St. Ives drew near a close, and the income from the farm grew less instead of greater. The two oldest boys were now at school, and the expense of keeping them there, added to the

problem of feeding and clothing the large family of children at home, filled the days with anxious care. And then, when the burden was the heaviest, in the last days of January, 1636, news was brought to the farm that Sir Thomas Steward, an uncle of Oliver Cromwell's, was dead, and that his nephew was his principal heir.

CHAPTER V

The Tithe Collector: The Lord of the Fens

THE story goes that the site of the old Saxon town of Ely was once an island of the sea, separated from the mainland by several miles of salt water. However that may be, the town certainly does rise somewhat above the surrounding fenland, higher than the towns of St. Ives and Huntingdon, which lie a dozen miles away to the southwest. Near the center of this town one of England's magnificent old cathedrals rears its towers toward the sky. Surrounded by green fields and rolling, wooded fells, with the quaint, narrow streets of the town straggling away from the encircling green, a lovelier spot cannot be found in all England. Almost in the shadow of the cathedral, close to the churchyard of St. Mary's, stands an ancient, two-story timber and plaster

house. Its front windows, latticed and diamond-paned, look down the road toward Cambridge. The wide, heavy front door, with its glistening brass knocker, leads into a hall, dark and brown beamed. To the left, a door opens into the drawing room, or parlor, a beautiful old room with white paneled walls



The wainscoted parlor at Ely.

and ceiling. To the right, another heavy doorway leads into the old-fashioned dining room. From the end of the entrance hall a narrow corridor winds back to a long, many-cornered room with panels, cupboards, and picturesque windows. More than two hundred and fifty years ago Oliver Cromwell sat in this room, looking out over the broad cathedral lands. His mother's brother and father had sat before the same window during their lifetime, and in the early months of 1637 he had come with his family and his mother to the old

house to take up the work left undone by his uncle. For centuries the cathedral had had in its possession certain land which



St. Mary's, at Ely.

was rented out to different farmers, who, in return, paid tithes, or tenths, to the church. It was Oliver Cromwell's duty to look after these tithes, to collect them and see that they were stored in the big barns at the rear of the churchyard. Perhaps in no other way could he have

come in as close touch with the poor class of people as in this work, and in the year and a half of his life at Ely he had become as closely connected with their affairs as at St. Ives and Huntingdon. Just now, in the fall of 1637, his interest was unusually strong, for he saw a plan being

worked out that he knew would bring want or discomfort to many.

Until this trouble had arisen, the year had been one of great satisfaction to Cromwell. Six months before the draining of the great Fenland had been undertaken with vigor, and the wandering waters of the Ouse had been drawn from stagnant pools and off-shooting, meandering streams into the original river bed and confined there by strong embankments. Scattered throughout marshy lands, lying between pools and streams, were patches of good pasture lands which for centuries had been used by the people for their cattle. Now that the marshes had been drained, these tracts were good farming land, and those high in authority wanted them. The graziers were told to find other pastures for their cattle; and then a great clamor arose in Ely. But the complaint had been nothing more than a clamor until Oliver Cromwell, fired with the idea that his good friends were meeting with injustice, took up their defense.

It was the plan for their defense that occupied him to-day as he sat in the old tithe room, looking out of the open door



Cromwell in the tithe room at Ely.

through which some of his lowly friends had just passed. Unjust he felt their treatment by the drainers had certainly been, but feeling would have no weight with the rulers of the land. There must be a legal basis for his operations or his voice would carry no

farther than the voices of his friends, who were crying out without avail. Turning his eyes from the door, Cromwell drew forth a paper from the mass of scattered receipts on the heavy desk. It was with this document that he hoped to bring the authorities to terms and to reestablish his friends' claims to the pasture lands.

The following months proved that Oliver Cromwell had planned with strength and clearness. Until this time, it is probable the old cathedral town had paid no attention to the quiet tithe collector. But now its good people were awakened in no uncertain manner. They saw the common people drive their cattle back to the rich pasture lands along the Ouse, where they were to pay a tiny sum for the rent, in order to hold their rights; they saw those who had attempted to seize the newly drained farms forced into a contract which withheld them from interfering with these rights for five years; and more than all, they saw the nobility, the rich upper class, for the first time in their history, stand back while the common people, the under class, walked triumphantly into the much desired land.

The trouble had not been confined to the peasants alone, but the middle class also had been threatened in their rights to the pasture lands; neither had it been confined to Ely alone; but all the country

up and down the twenty miles of the river Ouse had been loud in its complaints. With the early days of 1638 Cromwell found the trouble fully settled, and was aroused suddenly to the fact that, for the first time in his life, he was widely popular. He had struck so forcibly, with such a sure aim, and with such a thorough understanding of his cause, that the people recognized a steadiness of power in him that made them marvel. The "Lord of the Fens," he was nicknamed, a name standing for the foundation principles of Cromwell's life.

He was now forty years old, and only twice in his life had he compelled the attention of the public—once at Huntingdon and now at Ely. Each time the occasion had been his successful defense of the weak against the oppression of those in authority. His mother, who had come to make her home with him at Ely, must have rejoiced in these signs of his power. The anxiety which she had felt for him in his younger days, an anxiety lest his



THE MOTHER OF OLIVER CROMWELL

From a portrait by Robert Walker, at Hinchinbrook. Reproduced from Morley's "Oliver Cromwell" by courtesy of The Century Co. and the Earl of Sandwich.

force should take a wrong direction, could rest now, for her son had certainly walked the road of fearless right each time this power had been called upon.

Altogether, the days that followed were probably the happiest the family had ever had, perhaps the most peaceful they were ever to enjoy. The popularity which Cromwell had earned brought them many friends, and the salary of tithe collector, while not large, was sufficient to cover their needs. The financial problem was not an easy one even here, however, for with Robert, Oliver, Richard and Henry away at school, and Bridget, Elizabeth, Mary and Frances at home, it took all the thrift and care of the mother and grandmother to make both ends meet. But the present was so much easier than the past at St. Ives, that contentment filled the house at Ely.

And it was in the very midst of this happiness, in the days when relief from financial care made it possible for the father and mother to take pride and comfort in their children, that word was

brought to them that Robert, their eldest son, was seriously ill. The four boys were at Felsted, a school near the country home of their grandfather in Essex. Whether Robert was cared for at his grandfather's home or whether he was too ill from the beginning to be brought home, cannot be told. But there were days of suffering and suspense in Ely, of waiting with dread for messages, of hasty riding across the country to care for the boy through sleepless nights and days. Oliver Cromwell, in spite of his stern nature, in spite of his abundant force spending itself in troubles of outsiders, was always a man of deepest affection toward his family. Full of a tenderness unusual in a man of his nature, his love for his mother, wife, and children formed a great passion in his life. Robert was about eighteen, and his father, remembering his own disappointments and responsibility at that age, had hoped to give the boy freedom from all he had undergone. But in spite of the hopes, the fears, the tender watchfulness,

Robert grew steadily worse; and in the last of May, 1639, Oliver Cromwell stood in the churchyard at Felsted by the grave of his son, facing the first great grief of his life.

CHAPTER VI

The Farmer Citizen as a Great English General

A YEAR and a half after the death of Oliver Cromwell's son two men were sitting in the English House of Commons watching the members assemble. The king had tried every method known to raise money during the past four years, but all his efforts had failed. At last, because of trouble with Scotland, he had turned to his people and called a Parliament. There had been a short session of six months before this one, but the members had refused demands for money to support an army to invade Scotland, and Charles had sent them home. Now, once more, the king had tried, and the representatives of the people, smarting under the tyranny and oppression of past years, scanned each other with careful eyes. Each one measured the strength of the

other for the coming struggle. Into the midst of this assembly strode a man of strong build, dressed in clothes evidently



"Into the midst of this assembly strode a man of strong build."

made by a country tailor. His linen was not overly clean and his hat was without a band. A short sword, stuck close to his side, looked out of place on his unkempt, slouching figure. Dull, heavy-lidded eyes looked forth from a face swollen and reddened by a long ride through raw November winds.

With the opening of the session this

man rose to make a speech. His voice was sharp and harsh, but the eloquence and earnestness with which he spoke compelled the two men to lean forward with eager interest.

"Pray," said one of them, "who is that man, for I see he is on our side by his speaking so warmly to-day?"

"That sloven," replied his companion, "whom you see before you, hath no ornament in his speech; that sloven, I say, if we should ever come to a breach with the king, which God forbid! in such a case, I say, that sloven will be the greatest man in England."

The "sloven" was Oliver Cromwell, who, because of his fame as Lord of the Fens, because of his fearless stand for right against oppression, had been chosen by Cambridge to represent her needs in Parliament. With a king on the throne whose word could not be depended upon, who used his power to promise certain rewards for money granted to him and then broke his promises; with this same

king increasing the ceremonies of the Church of England, even against the wishes of the steadily growing Puritan power; with the victorious army of the Scots encamped within their very borders, and with the defeated English army lying away to the north, a heavy expense to the nation, the people were looking for men of unquestioned strength and truth to defend their rights.

In the year that followed Cromwell's entrance into the new Parliament the gulf widened between king and people. There were bickerings over peace with Scotland. The king was found to be plotting with the army in order to force Parliament to grant him money. In the House of Commons the Puritan party was coming steadily to the front. The king's favorite advisor was condemned to death by this party, and Charles was forced to sign the death warrant.

Toward the end of the year the king was also forced to sign a bill which stated that Parliament could not be dissolved

without its own consent. About this time a rebellion broke out in Ireland, and the Catholics of that island began a terri-



Puritans.

ble slaughtering and torturing of the Protestants. On Christmas Day of 1641 the streets of London were filled with men, women, and children going with petitions to Parliament—petitions clamoring for the rights of the common people and for the suppression

of the rebellion in Ireland. The day of peace was turned to one of bloodshed and fury. The king's courtiers, or Cavaliers as they called themselves, rode through the city in their lace ruffles and embroidered cloaks, jeering the "Roundheads," as they had nicknamed the Puritans because of their close-cropped heads.

And what had been Oliver Cromwell's

place in these years of strife? He had served on a committee to look after the interests of the poor cattle graziers in the St. Ives fens, and had burst forth with his accustomed fury at any seeming interference with these interests. He had made himself forcibly known to all connected with that work, and had greatly shocked the cultured gentlemen with whom he came in contact. Then there had come a Grand Petition from the House of Commons,—a petition for reform in the king's power and for purity in the church. Cromwell had made himself very prominent in presenting this, especially because he could think of nothing but success in the venture. But in spite of this firm belief, the debate on the petition lasted all day and on into the night. In fact, the bells of St. Margaret's Church were chiming two in the morning before the question was settled. So certain had Cromwell been of the outcome, and so astonished over the delay, that he said, as he came out of the House:

"If the Remonstrance had been rejected I would have sold all that I had the next morning and never have seen England any more; and I know there are many other honest men of the same resolution."

This outburst was characteristic of the man, for when a question was based on right, Cromwell's faith always led him to believe that there could be naught but a successful outcome. Had England known this of the new member from Cambridge, the country would have had good cause for anxiety over an idea that was gradually coming to absorb Cromwell's mind, an idea that the longed-for purification of the church could never come about except through armed force. This thought was generally accepted by the Puritans, but with it came the question whether the already tottering throne might not fall if the church were attacked. That the government of the church was closely interwoven with that of the state did not matter to Cromwell. For years his mind

had been set on establishing a more simple church service as well as a simpler way of living. The King headed the opposite party: the king must be brought to change his views—by reason if possible; if not, by force. If in so doing the House of Commons, which represented the Puritan power, threatened the ancient government of England, why so it must be.

If King Charles had been made of stronger stuff; if, even at this hour, he had taken a straightforward course and had been honest with Parliament, Cromwell's idea of using force need never have come to fulfillment. England loved her Cavalier king, and a show of fair dealing on his part, even at this late day, would have set matters right with the people. But in the weeks following that troublesome Christmas Day of 1641, Charles rode through the turbulent streets of London to

*A Cavalier.*

the House of Parliament, followed by five hundred gay, boasting Cavaliers, and attempted to take prisoner five Puritan leaders. This act was like touching flame to straw. All England rose in condemnation. The uproar became so alarming that the king was forced to flee from his palace of Whitehall and hasten away to the north to join the army, while the queen went to Holland, partly for safety, partly, perhaps, to get money for the king in the coming struggle.

Cromwell's long firmly-rooted idea that, sooner or later, force must be used to bring about peace, now took voice in a motion he made to put the kingdom in a state of defense. His object was to help the Protestants in Ireland and to protect Parliament from any attacks. The energy and devotion which had possessed him regarding the trouble in the Fenlands now took hold of him with a strength as much greater as this question was greater than the other. With a sacrifice that marked the depth of his feeling he immediately

followed his motion with a gift of £600 to aid in carrying on the war in Ireland, and another of £500 to help support the army in England. Without waiting for the approval of Parliament, he bought arms to the extent of £100 and sent them to Cambridge. Any one of these acts would have been sufficient to convict a man of treason, if the king came back to his power. Cromwell knew this, but he moved on with a fearless belief in the success of his cause.

The long years of suppressed energy were now at an end. Cromwell's power for action, which his mother had foreseen so many years before, was to have full play, and many of his friends now watched the man with the same fear she had felt in his youth. With a captain's commission and power to drill the troops of Cambridgeshire, Cromwell set off north to put into use his long-stored activity. Where he had acquired the knowledge he displayed in the following months, no one can tell. That a man living over twoscore years of quiet

farm life should suddenly come forward with all the genius of a great warrior seems impossible, and yet that is what Oliver Cromwell did in the early months of that memorable English summer. His popularity in the Fenlands brought men flocking to his standard, and from among these neighbors, kinsmen, and friends he selected sixty to follow him. With unerring judgment he selected men of tireless strength and intense religious faith. No matter how close a friend was, unless these qualities were foremost, Cromwell would have none of him in his company.

In those days the foot soldiers were armed with long pikes and heavy, awkward guns. These arms made the troops slow in their movements, and unless protected by mounted soldiers, or hidden behind hedges or walls, the men were at the mercy of the enemy. In the days before the climax of the trouble Cromwell had been studying this difficulty, and had seen the absolute necessity of a good cavalry if the foot soldiers were to be of any use in battle.

This was especially true of the Puritan soldier, he knew, for the king's troops were all experienced horsemen, men who had ridden from their earliest years, and whose very name, "Cavalier," was enough to awe the hearts of the sturdy lower class, who were unused to fiery war steeds.

With this weakness of the English army before him, Cromwell did not stop with his careful selection of men or trust to their enthusiasm to win victories. Although he himself believed they were fighting for God, and therefore that all help and care would be on the Puritan side, yet he gave his soldiers to understand that every detail of military training must be made as perfect as time and strength and skill could make it. Through the summer months, in heat that made their heavy armor almost unbearable, the troops of Cambridgeshire found that Cromwell was as unrelenting in his discipline as he was enthusiastic in his faith. In connection with this heavy duty of daily drill, the new captain kept his eyes constantly open to

prevent the Cavaliers from getting a hold in Cambridgeshire. In July he seized the arms at Cambridge, and prevented the king's troops from carrying away the



The house at Ely, facing the green where Cromwell drilled his soldiers.

gold and silver plate of the university. This plate would have brought Charles £20,000 in money, if it had reached him.

In October, and long before Cromwell's troops were ready for action, they were called upon to help defend the rights of Parliament in the battle of Edgehill. Although their captain was far from satisfied with their training, they were among the few who held their own on the field. Neither side could claim the victory, but the Puritans learned that their weakness lay in their cavalry, and in a lack of daring bravery, as Cromwell had indeed foreseen, and as he now wrote to a Puritan commander:

"Your troops," he said, "are most of them old decayed serving men and tapsters, and such kinds of fellows; and their troops are gentlemen's sons and persons of quality. Do you think the spirits of such base and mean fellows will ever be able to encounter gentlemen that have honor and courage and resolution in them? . . . You must get men of spirit, and, take it not ill what I say—I know you will not—of a spirit that is likely to go as far as gentlemen will go, or else you will be beaten still."

The haughty troops of the king had boasted that only one battle would be needed to teach the Puritans the uselessness of attempting to measure force with them. What was their surprise to find the Roundheads claiming as much of a victory as did the proud Cavalier horsemen. Not only did they make the claim, but they immediately set about to organize troops with greater care, as if the conflict was to be continued indefinitely. The English shires were divided into groups and formed

into Associations. Cromwell, who was made colonel early in 1643, was here, there, everywhere throughout his beloved fen country, hunting suspicious characters, pulling down Royalist meetings, and riding even beyond these marshy brooks to help build the six counties surrounding him into a solid stretch of land where no Royalist dared show his head with safety.

During all these months the training of his troops continued. One favorite way of testing their staunchness was to place twelve good men in hiding near the king's ambuscade. At the bugle call these men would rush out upon a newly mustered set of soldiers. The overwhelming fear which overtakes some men in their first battle was at once shown, and a few ran panic-stricken to the nearest shelter. Cromwell took these men and scattered them among the braver and better trained troops, who encouraged them and held them at their posts until the first days of service had passed.

It was quite possible for Cromwell to

inspire his men with courage and to perfect them in discipline by the sheer force of his leadership, but food, clothing, and ammunition could not be produced in the same way. Men's pocketbooks were no more easily reached in those days than now, and the calls upon private and pub-



A corner of the old tithe room.

lic funds were many and heavy. In the midst of his enthusiastic drilling, the lack of necessary arms, food, and clothing would send Cromwell in hot wrath to the old tithe room at Ely, where he would vent his indignation in letters to his superiors. In one of these he said:

“Lay not too much on the back of a poor gentleman, who desires, without much noise, to lay down his life and bleed the last drop to serve the cause and God. I ask not money for myself: I desire to deny myself; but others will not be satisfied.”

His energy and popularity never left his own immediate troops long in such want, but he was often driven to pleading for relief for others in these eastern shires, and in another letter written from Cambridge in March, 1642, he begged help for one of his captains.

He hath diligently attended the service, and much improved his men in their exercise; but hath been unhappy beyond others in not receiving any pay for himself, and what he had for his soldiers is out long ago. He hath, by his prudence, what with fair and winning carriage, what with money borrowed, kept them together. He is able to do so no longer: they will presently disband, if a course be not taken. . . .

I beseech you, therefore, consider this Gentleman, and the soldiers; . . . It may, through God's blessing, prove very happy. One month's pay may prove all your trouble. I speak to wise men:— God direct you. I rest,

Yours to serve you,

OLIVER CROMWELL.

And Puritan England had need of Oliver Cromwell's service, and had need to grant his desire. The first six months of the year 1643 were months of delay, discouragement, and defeat for the sturdy Roundheads. There were efforts to come to peace with Charles, efforts in which neither king nor Parliament was willing to yield a point. There were constant Puritan defeats away to the west and south, where the officers were allowing delays and poor drilling to interfere with their victories. In all this darkness Oliver Cromwell was the one steady, undimmed light. While Parliament was frittering its time away in fruitless attempts at peace, Cromwell was drilling his troops for war. While the Cavaliers were sending dismay into the hearts of the Puritans by western victories, Cromwell was fortifying his counties, pushing the boundaries of eastern Puritan England farther and farther into the Cavalier country, clearing the churches of the hated decorations, and driving out all royal sympathizers. Finally the Eastern Association stood for

Parliament from boundary to boundary. This had been accomplished by Cromwell's not allowing his troops to think of anything but war. If peace came, well and good; but in the meantime he meant that his section should be prepared to dictate peace suited to its Puritan tastes.

In the meantime Charles had established himself at Oxford and put Prince Rupert, with all the haughty Cavalier spirit of the royal family, at the head of his gay, dashing army. To have the boundary of the eastern counties rise forbidding and invincible, and to know that Cromwell's troops were even scurrying near their very fortifications, threatening to carry their line of defense fairly to the king's camp, brought a large degree of dismay and fear into the contempt these court gentlemen had had for their Round-head neighbors.

Several serious encounters in the spring proved that Cromwell's men were fitted for something besides scouting. Late one May evening his troops, "poor and broken,"

as Cromwell himself said, met with some Cavalier troops near Grantham. With a suddenness which thrilled his men with enthusiasm, Cromwell dashed his cavalry on the enemy, who halted in astonishment to receive the charge. Although they out-numbered the Puritans, the king's troops scattered before the onsweeping, despised Roundheads in utter defeat. Cromwell took none of the glory of this victory, but wrote to his superior officers:

*Cromwell's watch.*

“We drew out our forces . . . some of them so poor and broken, that you shall seldom see worse. With this handful it pleased God to cast the scale.”

The following months increased the feeling of respect that this skirmish had brought to the breasts of the king's soldiers, and they gradually became convinced that there was one man in the Puritan forces whose military genius and knowledge of men made him a leader with powers that threatened the king himself.

Charles, fearful of this strong force, ordered a large section of his army to march from the north, through the eastern shires, to London. The Roundhead troops were rallied to defend the northern outpost at Gainsborough. Among these troops was Cromwell's regiment. In the last week in July the two armies came together in a clash that startled England from border to border. Cromwell, the despised Roundhead, met a strong troop of the king's cavalry and put them to utter rout. The leader of the Cavaliers, Cavendish, one of the bravest, gayest courtiers on the island, met his death by the thrust of a Roundhead sword, while his defeated army stood helpless in a quagmire where they had been driven by the skilled movements of the enemy. That the victorious regiment was defeated later in the day by a fresh Royalist army did not relieve the dismay, for even against the entire northern army, and after a day of terrible fighting, the discipline and courage of Cromwell's troop blazed forth brilliantly in a wonderful

retreat, in which not one man was lost. The fame and strength of the king's army had always lain in its horsemen; to have that strength overcome or even threatened by a cavalry of only a few months' training gave a seriousness to the war that the king had never dreamed possible.

Yet, even while the Cavaliers were still rubbing their eyes and straightening themselves for a severe struggle, the Puritan outlook was most gloomy. Two days after the conflict the town of Gainsborough, to which the Roundheads had withdrawn, was compelled to surrender. Unless heavy reinforcements could quickly reach Cromwell, there seemed to be nothing to keep the king's army from marching straight south to London. Cromwell's excitement and feeling of desperate need are shown in a letter he wrote to Cambridge for help:

"It's no longer Disputing, but Out instantly all you can!... You must act lively; do it without distraction. Neglect no means!"

Two days later he followed this with

another call for aid, showing what double anxiety the man was suffering.

"The money I brought with me," he wrote, "is so poor a pittance when it comes to be distributed amongst all my troops that, considering their necessity,—it will not half clothe them. . . . If we have not more money speedily, they will be exceedingly discouraged. I am sorry you put me to it to write thus often. It makes it seem a needless importunity in me; whereas, in truth, it is a constant neglect of those that should provide for us. Gentlemen, make them able to live and subsist that are willing to spend their blood for you!—I say no more."

Parliament rallied at this cry for help and "out instantly" with an army of ten thousand men. The northern foe was met in the woods near Winceby. Eager for revenge, they came sweeping recklessly through the trees, shouting, "Cavendish! Cavendish!" while the Roundheads rallied their forces with the cry, "Truth and Peace!" Steadily the Puritans held their

own, pushing the Cavaliers back and back again, until the last Royalist stood not only beyond the original boundary of the eastern counties, but Parliament looked with satisfaction on an entirely new northern shire added to the Puritan stronghold.

In the meantime, while he had been galloping his horsemen through the sand hills around Gainsborough, Cromwell had been appointed governor of the old town of Ely, where his family still found their home within the shadow of the cathedral. From here Cromwell had gone forth in his brilliant dashes through the eastern shires, here he had drilled his troops on the old green, and set forth his belief in the simpler forms of church service. Many of the village people had breathed in enough of his spirit so they also resented the manners and customs of the Church of England, and looked to him to bring about a new order of things. It is needless to say that such a task was just what Cromwell liked, and that he set about to fulfill their

expectations with his usual energy. As soon as he could leave his battle fields, he returned to the old cathedral town to begin his duties as governor. The first step was to write a letter to the Episcopal rector, forbidding choir music and commanding more scripture and sermons. The rector, probably despising the blunt Roundhead who had turned that part of England into a Puritan hotbed, paid no attention to the letter, but went on with his choir singing and other ceremonies as usual. He had not reckoned on the energetic thoroughness of Oliver Cromwell. Without more ado the governor turned himself into a military tyrant and, with half a dozen or so of his Roundheads clanking noisily at his heels, marched to the cathedral. With his hat on his head and his hand on his sword, the Lord of the Fens strode sternly through the great west door of the church and straight down the wide aisle to the altar, where, amidst delicately carved marble, polished gold, and gleaming candles, the

choir boys were singing their Glorias. At the sight and sound of the hated Puritans an astonished silence fell on the choir, and Cromwell called out:

"I am a man under authority and am commanded to dismiss this Assembly."

He and his guard then stepped back to allow the choir and rector to pass out quietly. But not even then had the rector come to an understanding of Oliver Cromwell's temper.

"As it was in the beginning," he chanted in defiance, with the choir boys coming in weakly at the last. Before another note could come forth there was a swish of drawn swords, a rattle of armor, and a roar from the governor of Ely that echoed to the vaulted roof.

"Leave off your fooling, and come down, Sir."

The rector came; and with him his choir boys, and they, together with the congregation, marched as quickly out from the west door as the Roundheads had marched in.

CHAPTER VII

Victory

ABOUT the time that Cromwell came home to cleanse the ancient town of hated Royalists and the still more hated religion, a messenger of sorrow came riding once more to the old timbered house at Ely, as the one had come five years before to bring ill news from the schoolboy Robert. Oliver, bearing the old family name, and having with it all the pride, bravery, and strength of his knightly ancestors, was dangerously ill with smallpox in a war camp, miles away. He had enlisted in the great struggle several years before and gone out from the home, inspired by the father's energy and hope of victory. The same days of suspense followed the coming of the messenger that had followed the news of Robert's illness, and then came the same dreaded word of the boy's death.

Before the father had time to raise his stricken head or give comfort to the lonely, anxious woman who had grown old with fear and waiting in the last ten years, another messenger came riding out of the north with news that Prince Rupert, with twenty thousand men, was dashing down from the hills toward the Puritan line of defense. The word was scarcely out of the mouth of the carrier before the heavy oak door of the old house crashed behind the governor of Ely, and the startled townspeople heard the ring of armor and the clatter of horse's feet as he rode swiftly off to the north. Perhaps the hidden suffering of the father's heart found relief in the action that followed. At any rate, the result told of unlimited energy and undimmed faith.

On the afternoon of a July day in 1644 the Puritan troops were assembled by the side of a great ditch on Marston Moor. On the opposite side was the royal army with Prince Rupert in the lead, dressed in shining armor and cloak of scarlet, with

a brilliant plume streaming from his helmet. With the Puritan cry of "God and one cause!" challenging the prince's shout of "God and our king!" the forces



The battle of Marston Moor.

rushed into the fight. At the same instant a severe storm broke over the battle field. With the sweep of the summer wind and rain Prince Rupert, bravely sure of his victory, drove the first wing in utter rout from the field, then, happy and confident, fell on a second division.

But far over on one side curious sounds came to his ears, snatches of hymns, of chanted psalms from the throats of three hundred strong men who, in perfect discipline, awaited their leader's commands.

While the gay Cavaliers dashed off with shouts of victory after the second defeated wing, these strongly courageous, singing troops followed their commander in perfect order around the ditch and then descended like a raging tornado on the rear of the Royalist army. For just one instant did the onward rush hesitate, and that was when the shouting, exhorting leader reeled in the saddle from a bullet wound in the neck. But with the cry coming from the stinging pain in his throat, "A miss is as good as a mile," the Roundheads gave a great roar of enthusiasm and swept on in relentless force. Nothing could withstand the crash of their attack. As Cromwell himself said: "God made them (the enemy) as stubble to our swords."

With the passing of the storm, Prince Rupert came trotting radiantly back from his pursuit of the Puritans to find his reserve troops in flying confusion and line upon line of invincible Roundheads occupying the very position he had so gallantly and confidently held a short time

before. Wearied with their recent struggle and ride against the storm, the Royalists found themselves facing an attack from fresh troops who moved with perfect mili-



Clump of trees on Marston Moor from which Cromwell watched the battle.

tary precision, while another body of the enemy suddenly closed in on their slow, straggling rear.

The end was not long in coming, and as the summer day turned into the long gray twilight the scarlet cloaks and shining armor, the surging battle cries and brave hearts of the Cavaliers all proved helpless before the stern religious zeal of Cromwell's troops. The bloodiest battle of the war had become a Roundhead victory. The king had lost his hold in the north. Oliver Cromwell, a subordinate officer at Marston Moor, had earned the title of Ironsides,

a name world famous in its inspiration for fearless right and standing for all that is best in military skill.

If the leaders in Parliament had only been ready to acknowledge Cromwell's genius by putting him immediately in command of all their forces, the history of England would have been quickly changed. The king was now in an almost defenseless position in central England, and a swift descent upon him would undoubtedly have crushed him and his army; but a jealousy of Cromwell had sprung up, and that, together with the forming of new parties in Parliament, took away the full force of the victory at Marston Moor. Sluggish, incapable generals were retained, and the opportunity for ending the struggle slipped by, while Cromwell protested, advised, and grew desperate over the delay.

But this lost opportunity was only one of many things which pointed out to Cromwell the necessity of a reform in the Puritan army. Leaving his active warfare

for the time, he went down to London and, amidst a startled silence in the House of Commons, denounced the whole plan of the war with such convincing force that, regardless of the feeling that had grown up against him, reforms were instantly started.

"It is now a time to speak, or forever hold the tongue," he thundered. "The important occasion now, is no less than To save a Nation, out of a bleeding, nay almost dying condition: which the long continuance of this War hath already brought it into; so that without a more speedy, vigorous and effectual prosecution of the War,—casting off all lingering proceedings . . . we shall make the kingdom weary of us, and hate the name of a Parliament."

A Self-denying Ordinance was passed, by which all members of Parliament were to give up positions in the army. Such a general sweeping out of officers would do away with the slow, wavering officials.

A second bill was passed arranging for

a New Model Army and through that law the poorly disciplined soldiers were to be put into training for effective fighting. The whole aim of the reform was to do away with delays and to end the war by vigorous action under the direction of a leader willing to undertake any risks for speedy victories.

This reform was the more necessary since the war was a civil war. Although the people were starving, the land was neglected, because all able-bodied men were taking part in the war, or because the fields were swept by destroy-



*Wooden figure of an
officer of the
New Model Army.*

ing armies. Throughout the debate over these bills Cromwell had been ready to sacrifice himself and his friends if Parliament would only reform the slow, undecided method of war. He showed the greatest skill in steering his schemes through the opposition of the numerous parties. In his work at this time he revealed the quality of

highest statesmanship: the sacrifice of self and party to the public good. This was a new field of fame, and the Lord of the Fens, the hero of Marston Moor, stood out before the English nation in a new and powerful light.

The Self-denying Ordinance made no exception in its cleaning out of parliamentary officers, and Oliver Cromwell's commission was withdrawn with the others. But an influential member of the House suggested that the general be left in camp a few days to assist in the appointment of new commanders. The few days were extended to three months, and then to six. In the meantime the Puritan army, strengthened, enthusiastic, and eager for victory, met the king's forces at Naseby, a little village standing on a hilltop in the very heart of England.

Very early one morning in June the king marched his troops to the moor surrounding the town and placed them in a commanding position on Dust Hill. A little later in the morning the Roundhead

generals appeared, in the clear light, on a neighboring hill. Prince Rupert recognized one of them as the psalm-singing general, Oliver Cromwell, who had taught him such a bitter lesson at Marston Moor. The Roundhead had arrived the day before with six hundred men, freshly drilled and eager for the fray. After viewing the superior position of the Cavaliers, the Puritans started to withdraw to a more protected position.

Prince Rupert, in spite of his experience with the bravery of the Puritan troops, still believed them to be cowards, and besought the king to advance and attack the retreating enemy. With impetuous haste the Cavaliers abandoned their good position and marched their glittering troops across the mile and a half of level moorland to attack the Puritans, who were intrenching themselves in a protected position. The crimson banner of the king, with the gold-embroidered crown, floated in the center of the royal army. On the left the queen's flag of French fleur-de-lis

appealed to the Cavaliers' knightly hearts, while to the right a streamer of blue marked the troops of Prince Rupert. It was this fluttering blue flag that led the



*Arms of the
Stuart kings.*

onslaught, and its dashing followers swept the Round-heads before them. For a time it looked as if the New Model Army was to suffer defeat, but the gay prince had never learned the lesson so often given him. Without looking to his foot soldiers or the ranks of the enemy, he dashed away after the scattered division of Round-heads. Cromwell then pursued the same course as at Marston Moor. His troops swept down on the king's crimson banner and dragged it from the field in utter defeat. The victorious prince returned only to be driven, with the king, into flight. The defeat was absolute. The king was left helpless. The New Model had proved itself to be all that Oliver Cromwell had hoped. The civil war was practically

over, and friends and foes alike had the Lord of the Fens to thank for it. He, himself, however, said:

“I can say this of Naseby, That when I saw the Enemy draw up and march in gallant order towards us, and we a company of poor ignorant men, to seek how to order our battle,—the General having commanded me to order all the Horse,—I could not, riding alone about my business, but smile out to God in praises, in assurance of victory, because God would, by things that are not, bring to naught things that are. Of which I had great assurance; and God did it.”

CHAPTER VIII

An Unkingly King

FOR twelve months the king of England continued his pitiable defenses. And for twelve months Oliver Cromwell rode over the country, crashing into strongholds and scattering royal centers, until scarcely a district in England was left unmarked by the invincible Ironsides.

But while the kingdom was dying hard, and the man of action was doing his mightiest to make the end complete, Parliament was spending its days in endless bickerings that were to bring still greater trouble into war-ridden England. Several years before this Parliament had sought an alliance with the Scots. The Scots had agreed to the alliance, but only when the English agreed, on their side, to establish the Presbyterian Church throughout the kingdom. This was a bitter dose for the Puritans to swallow, but they were

forced to yield because of their sore need of a strengthened army. But even with this necessity facing them, a small party resented the alliance to the last. This second group gained strength through the support of Oliver Cromwell and his Ironsides. The breach widened in Parliament until the two parties became so absorbed in their own quarrels they fairly lost sight of the king.

Charles, however, was not unmindful of Parliament, and when he saw the members forgetting their original quarrel he grasped the opportunity to strengthen his cause. By May, 1646, matters had reached their climax. The Scotch were angry because the English Parliament was not keeping its promises. The Presbyterian Church was not being established with the stern zeal the Scotch demanded, and the money to pay the allied army of Scotland was not forthcoming. If Charles had been a shrewd statesman he could have turned the anger of the Scots and the split in Parliament to glorious account. He did go so far as

to seek the Scottish army in disguise. Once there he attempted to play the sturdy Scotch against the stubborn Parliament, in hopes of gaining more for himself. His small-minded cunning and policy of double dealing were already so well known that his schemes were soon discovered. The Scots, in utter disgust with the whole affair, turned the king over to Parliament in return for a sum of money, and then marched off to their own borders, leaving Charles, the Presbyterians, and the Independents to fight the matter out among themselves.

Parliament, it seemed, had lost sight entirely of the fact that the quarrel was with the king and the Church of England. Largely made up of Presbyterians, or those favoring the Scotch alliance, the members spent their time attempting to undermine the power of the army, because that body was influenced by the Independents. The soldiers were clamoring for payment, and Parliament was trying to send them home to their starving families

with empty pockets. Oliver Cromwell tried his best to bring peace between these quarreling parties. He promised the army that its petitions should be heard, and at the same time tried to impress upon Parliament the danger, as well as the injustice, of further arousing the anger of the soldiers.

In the meantime the army appointed agents to look after its interests, and these agents formed themselves into another Parliament. Instead of listening to Cromwell, the Presbyterian Parliament went so far as to begin secret communications with Charles and the Scotch, in order to raise another army. This treachery aroused Cromwell to fierce and bitter action. With his enthusiastic belief in religious and political freedom, he had gained complete control of the Independent party and, consequently, of the army. In June, 1647, he concluded that peaceable measures would have to be abandoned, and he resolved to strike.

A hasty message brought a few trusted men together. Cromwell's orders were

clear and forcible. The men moved immediately and swiftly to Holmby House, where the king was imprisoned. So secretly



Dashing away with the king.

had the maneuver been planned, and so carefully carried out, that London and Parliament rubbed their eyes in amazement to see a small body of men dash furiously away from Holmby House with the king in their midst. Once more the man from the Fens, with the heavy face and dull eyes, had outwitted them.

Following this bold movement the army tried to persuade Parliament to dissolve. Matters were in such a state of confusion generally that Cromwell concluded the

safest plan was to offer the king his throne again with the understanding that Puritan principles were to be carried out to the letter. Charles haughtily refused the proposal and although the plan in all its details was the broadest and best yet suggested, it came to nothing.

To add to Cromwell's disappointment in this a party had formed in the army which opposed every move except that which would help to set up a republic. This party now looked with suspicion on General Cromwell, and he found himself opposing the old friends and soldiers who had served him so long and loyally. With far-seeing eyes he saw that England was not prepared to give up its government by kings for an untried republic. The men who were working for the destruction of the kingdom were dreamers who had little idea of the real work of governing, and from these the officers of a republic would naturally be chosen—and the republic would just as naturally fail under their poor management.

A mutiny broke out in the army only to be put down with great wrath and suddenness by Cromwell. About the same time King Charles escaped to the Isle of Wight, and there managed once more to open negotiations with the Scotch. Cromwell kept the king well under his watch, and was not long in discovering his schemes. This cunning of the king's in the face of all of Cromwell's frank offers put an end to the general's efforts to reestablish him. Before long the news came that the king's negotiations with the Scots had brought forth an army from that north country. With this disquieting message the discontent between Parliament and army came to an issue, and the Presbyterian members of Parliament marched over to the king's side.

England was once more thrown into civil war, and the army, enraged by the cunning of the king, the disloyalty of Parliament, and the fear of losing its long-fought-for cause, buried all its own quarrels and sprang to arms. Cromwell

was given his first independent command and sent into Wales to put down the royal stronghold at Pembroke Castle. It took just a month to starve the Cavaliers out of their towered walls, and then without more ado the Roundheads turned their faces northward to meet the Scottish army. The latter had already secured a stronghold just within the English border and was now marching south, threatening to take possession of central England as it had taken the north. The remainder of the English army was occupied with disturbances in London and in the south of the island.

Whether England was to pass under foreign rule, whether the coming of Charles was finally to succeed and the narrow creed of the Presbyterians was to be forced down Puritan throats, all of this hung in the balance as Cromwell led his troops northward. The deliverance from all these threatened disasters rested with him and his Ironsides. Vastly inferior in numbers and worn out with their long struggle, the

end did not look promising. But no fear of defeat entered the heart of the Lord of the Fens. Constant to the purpose that had held him through all the waverings of Parliament, he marched straight on, to the singing of psalms, absolutely certain that his cause would succeed.

The days following the meeting of the two armies proved that Cromwell's faith was well founded. The final battle began at Preston. The Roundheads poured down through a rough, muddy, and narrow lane with impetuous force. The fight lasted just three hours, and then the Scots broke and ran. Tired from its long marches, hindered by the August heat and storms, the army nevertheless rallied to Cromwell's exhortations and followed the fleeing Scots for thirty miles. On the fifth day, just as Cromwell was congratulating himself that the struggle was ended, the Scots turned and again gave battle. Night came on, and the full light of the harvest moon shone down on the struggling armies. Hour after hour the victory hung in the balance.

At one time the Roundheads broke and seemed about to fly, in spite of Cromwell's



The battle of Preston.

prayers and psalms. Just at this crisis a rumor ran through the Scottish lines that fresh Roundhead troops were coming to the help of the enemy. Panic-stricken, the invaders fled over the muddy, moonlit

fields. The pursuit was again taken up and another battle followed. The fight lasted all night long, but when the bright light of the August morning broke over the field, the Scots were conquered. The second civil war was at an end, and once more England had Oliver Cromwell to thank for the victory.

Twice during the struggle between the Puritans and the Cavaliers, Scotland had shown herself ready to interfere in English affairs. Cromwell concluded that the present lesson should be one to teach the northern country to remain within her own borders. In spite of the past long month of siege and march and battle, the general resolved to lead his Ironsides into Scotland, into the very heart of the Scottish defense, to Edinburgh and its fortress, perched high on a hill of solid rock. The northern English shires also contained strongholds devoted to the king's cause, and one after another these were shattered as the Roundheads pursued their victorious march.

When the border line between England and Scotland was finally reached, the army encamped on the banks of the Tweed to receive final orders before entering the neighboring country. A proclamation issued by Cromwell was read before each regiment, in which the soldiers were commanded to respect the property of the Scotch. No one, on pain of death, was to seize cattle or goods without special order; every soldier was to carry himself with the greatest courtesy toward the Scottish people, and any one giving offense to a citizen of the country was to be punished accordingly. The Scotch, hearing all this, received the victorious general with wholesome fear mingled with genuine admiration. The nobility and gentry in Edinburgh turned out in force to receive him with orations, firing of cannons, and fluttering of flags. His work in the city strengthened both the fear and the admiration of the Scots. With forcible plainness he dictated the terms of peace to the Parliament of Scotland, leaving no doubt

in the minds of the people that the stolid farmer of the English fens had left his sluggishness on the banks of the Ouse.



Jacques Reich

Oliver Cromwell. From a mask, said to have been taken during life, in the collection of Mrs. Frankland-Russell-Astley, at Chequers Court, Buckinghamshire, England.

So long as the Scotch kept out of the struggle in England, he dictated, they should have nothing to fear; but interference with church or state affairs would be met with sudden and crushing force. Yet with all this sweeping power Cromwell's stay in the city ended, as it had begun, in apparent friendliness. A huge farewell banquet was given him in the picturesque oak-beamed hall of Edinburgh

castle, where kings and queens had feasted in royal state. When the feasting, the congratulations, the shoutings were over, Cromwell quietly placed two regiments of stanch Roundheads at the castle so that the Scotch would have a constant reminder of the force behind his courtesy, and marched off toward England with cannons

booming farewell from the rocky platform of the castle.

While Cromwell had been putting an end to the second civil war, the Presbyterian Parliament had been continuing its dealings with the king. Cromwell's victories warned the leaders that unless they could strengthen themselves in some way their days of power were about over. In consequence, they actually passed a resolution of reconciliation with the king. This act was based on the old plan of making the Presbyterian Church the church of England, and was passed with the hope of combining the Royalist and Presbyterian forces in a final effort to defeat the Independents.

The news of this resolution reached Cromwell at Pontefract Castle, which he was besieging on his way back to London. He immediately turned the capture of the castle over to one of his officers and, with great wrath in his heart and a few tired Ironsides at his heels, swept off toward London. His recent triumphs had brought him a realization of his own power, or

rather, perhaps, a possibility of using that power with more decision and boldness than ever before. He believed that God had given him his recent victory, and, as that victory was over the Presbyterian Parliament as much as over the Scots and the king, he felt that now was the time to teach Parliament the same lesson he had taught Scotland.

Cromwell was in favor of dissolving Parliament and forming a new one by election, but the matter was settled in a far shorter and more forcible manner. On the opening of the session, December 6, 1648, Colonel Pride, one of the staunchest Independent leaders, stood at the door of the great house of Parliament with a tried body of soldiers back of him. As the members came up the steps, the names of those favorable to the king were whispered to the colonel, and they were seized and hustled off to prison. About one hundred and forty members were disposed of in this fashion, and those that were left, loyal to the original cause of freedom

in church and state, formed what was called the Rump Parliament.



Colonel Pride at the entrance of Parliament.

The Independents now ruled both army and Parliament. The Scots had been conquered and Parliament cleansed of its disturbing party, but the king, the third and most disturbing element of the three, still remained unpunished.

In the years that preceded the outbreak of the civil war, Charles had shown himself selfish, incapable of keeping his word, and with but one apparent belief, and that was in the divine right of kings, regardless of the rights or sufferings of their subjects. With the progress of the war these characteristics had grown stronger. The cunning and treachery Charles had shown toward all parties had kept England in constant war. Absorbed entirely with his own desire for power, his whole aim throughout the past years had been to regain his kingdom without sacrificing anything for the welfare of his subjects, especially if that sacrifice meant any denial of his own tastes or comfort. Two civil wars had been fought; England had been laid bare from coast to coast; the interfering Scots had been conquered; Parliament had again become loyal to the good of England. The people were now crying out for peace, and still peace did not follow. There remained but one disturbing element to blame for their desolation, and that element began

and ended with King Charles. The clamor against him grew rapidly louder as the country realized that he alone refused to bring peace to England.

Ever since his experience with Charles in the preceding spring, when he had offered the king his crown again, Cromwell had been convinced that no reliance could be placed in the good intentions of the monarch. To add to the threatening attitude of Charles, the queen was continually sending promises of support from abroad, and Prince Rupert was able to bring sufficient troops from Ireland and Scotland to plunge England into endless war. Before the breaking out of the second civil war there had been a prolonged prayer-meeting of the Puritan leaders. It was a most earnest meeting, and these bronzed and battered men, with many tears and groans, had resolved that Charles Stuart should be made to answer when peace was once more restored.

This time had come, and the men were grimly determined to keep their vows.

Cromwell had never entirely sympathized with these extreme measures. He had, in fact, often interfered to save the king from



Windsor Castle. In the room over the archway Charles I spent the night preceding his journey to London for trial.

humiliation, discomfort, and danger. But no amount of frank generosity could persuade Charles to be true, and Cromwell at last saw that an intensity of feeling was growing up in England which threatened not only the throne but the life of the king. Twice the

victorious general interfered to save that life, and finally, when the government demanded the king be brought to justice, Cromwell succeeded in having the trial postponed until one more effort could be made. A messenger rode off to Windsor to lay before the imprisoned king final offers of peace. Just what these offers were is

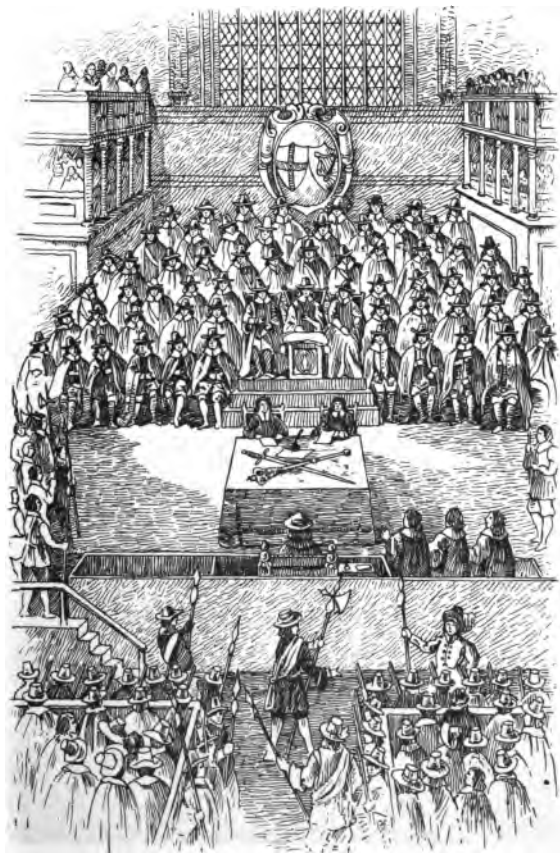
not known; but King Charles, driven to the wall, with no possibility of evading the stern Puritan vigilance, bore himself with the courage worthy of his position. There is no doubt that if he had signed away all guardianship of church and state he could have saved his life. This he refused to do. The messenger rode back to Cromwell with word that the king had refused even to see him. That was the end. Even Cromwell now yielded, feeling that all his efforts to save Charles had failed because God willed it so.

"If any man whatsoever," he said, "hath carried on the design of deposing the king and disinheriting his posterity; or, if any man hath yet such a design he should be the greatest rebel and traitor in the world; but since the Providence of God hath cast this upon us, I cannot but submit to Providence, though I am not yet provided to give advice."

CHAPTER IX

“Cruel Necessity”

“**B**Y the fundamental laws of England it is Treason in the King of England to levy war against the Parliament,” thundered forth the House of Commons, on New Year’s Day, 1649. In spite of England’s wasted homes, in spite of the king’s falseness, in spite of suffering in the past and anxiety for the future, these words must have shaken the island from coast to coast. It was true that Charles Stuart had set up a tyrannical power and to maintain it had caused a civil war, whereby the country had been miserably wasted, the public treasury exhausted, thousands of people murdered, and infinite other mischiefs committed; but still Charles Stuart was the king of England. What mighty force was it that had dared to question his right to the throne,—nay, his right to live, it might be? Following



The trial of Charles I.

fast upon the first ominous announcement came word that a court had been appointed to try the king for treason. Within three weeks this court assembled and the trial began. Never within the history of any kingdom had such a scene been enacted as that which was pushed to a close under the somber, massive roof of old Westminster Hall. On Saturday, January 20, Charles was brought before the court. Facing him sat his judges, members of the House of Commons, the army, and common citizens in their severe Puritan dress. Stripped of his royal robes and of his crown, the king looked out upon these hated Roundheads, while now and then the clank of armor and the ring of steel echoed down the cold stone walls.

When the charges were read Charles refused to answer them until he was told by what authority he had been brought there. When he was told, he refused to recognize the authority. He continued in this refusal for two days, and then asked to be heard before another court. The

commissioners withdrew for an hour and a half and returned only to deny the request; also to inform the king that if he had nothing more to say they would proceed to judgment. Charles replied that he had nothing more to say. A long speech was then made, justifying the action of the court, of Parliament, of the army. At the close of this speech the sentence was read—death by beheading. All Europe rang with horror and amazement. Before the wave of terror had swept by the king was led to the scaffold erected in front of the banqueting hall of his own palace and there executed.

If the English people had been shaken by the arrest of their king, the relentless vengeance that held throughout the trial, the quickness, the unswerving power that directed all energy toward the final sentence must have dazed them still more. The action was not that of an unorganized, emotional mob. There was but one man in all the island whose iron will and daring swiftness could have carried through the

trial and execution of England's king. That man was the Lord of the Fens, the psalm-singing leader of the Ironsides, the "sloven"—Oliver Cromwell. Convinced that it was God's will that the king should lose his life, he had been absolutely unyielding in the days of the trial. Wherever he saw weakness, wherever a faltering before the king's demands, he exhorted, persuaded, commanded. And through it all, in spite of his inspiration, Oliver Cromwell probably suffered as no man suffered in all England.

The night following the execution of Charles, two friends were keeping watch by the king in the banqueting hall of Whitehall Palace. As the clock was about to chime two in the morning these men were startled by a muffled figure coming slowly into the hall. With bowed head, the man approached the heavily draped bier, looked long and sadly at the body of Charles, then muttering "cruel necessity," moved away in the same heavy-hearted manner. The man was Oliver Cromwell.

CHAPTER X

A Leader in the English Commonwealth

THE ancient government of England was no more. The king had been executed as any common traitor. Many of the brilliant Cavaliers had fled for fear of a like fate. In their places of power sat the Roundheads, hated, despised, feared by the king's party and looked upon with wondering awe by the Puritans themselves. They had proved themselves worthy of this fear and awe on the battlefield. Could they prove worthy in the more delicate affairs of government? The Rump Parliament, as the only bit of authority left, proclaimed England to be a commonwealth. A Council of State was formed by the same body to act as the executive department. Oliver Cromwell was made a member of this council.

The first serious danger to the new

government arose from the party who had opposed Cromwell in his efforts to reëstablish the king. The members of this party began their work against the new



*Seal of the Commonwealth.
Obverse.*

government by appealing to the private soldiers and thus threatening rebellion against the army officers. Cromwell had protected and helped the leader of this party in years past, but when it became evident that this man was fighting the new government he put all sentiment, all memory of old friendship aside and insisted on punishment for the offender.

"I tell you, sir," he said, in the Council Chamber, "you have no other way of dealing with these men but to break them, or they will break you; yea, and bring all the guilt of the blood and treasure shed and spent in this kingdom upon your head and shoulders; and frustrate and make void all that work that with so many years of industry, toil, and pains you have done."

Following this speech the offenders were hustled out to the palace yard at Westminster. There they found their regiments drawn up, and each rebelling officer was commanded to mount his horse with his face to the tail and ride thus up and down before his men, with the faults of which he had been found guilty placarded on his breast.



*Seal of the Commonwealth.
Reverse.*

In spite of this humiliating example, it was not long before one regiment refused obedience to its officers, and Cromwell rode out in furious anger. Those who secretly sympathized with the opposition were to wear white on their hats. Cromwell had discovered this and had ordered ten regiments from a distance, who were ignorant of the trouble, to meet him at the place of mutiny. After they were all drawn up for inspection Cromwell rode forth and suddenly commanded his newly summoned regiments to surround the rebellious troops. In a roar of anger

he called out four of the offenders and committed them to a council of war. The white badges vanished like magic. The four men were condemned to death, but afterwards were allowed to cast lots so that only two were executed; but these two were shot by the other two in the presence of the army.

In spite of all this swift vengeance, discontent and jealousy spread throughout the land. Another war seemed possible, for the country people began to join the ranks of the opposers. This continued until Oliver Cromwell once more took matters in his own hands and marched forth to subdue the offenders. Fearing his relentless power, the plotters against the government fell back rapidly. Sweeping on at the rate of fifty miles a day, Cromwell's wrath grew as the pursuit lengthened. Finally, when he did come upon them, he came in such a whirlwind of long-gathered rage that the onslaught was irresistible. The opposition was at last crushed and Cromwell returned to London to be banqueted and thanked.

Barely two months of peace, however, followed this victory, a victory which had been doubly necessary to keep the army in loyal subjection for the defense of England against other foes. It could hardly be expected that the Cavaliers would yield all resistance or not attempt to avenge the death of their king. With undaunted courage they had at once proclaimed Charles's son king of Scotland, Ireland, and England.

*Cromwell's key.*

The new commonwealth was assured that it would be but a short time until the new king would attempt to seat himself, as Charles II, on England's deserted throne. That time came early in the spring. The Irish had accepted Charles II as their king almost immediately, and were now raising an army to support his cause.

At that time Ireland and Scotland were looked upon by England almost as foreign countries. Were the English to allow their government to be determined by a people

outside her boundaries? The attempt of Charles I to ally Ireland and Scotland with him against his own country had been one of the bitterest morsels the English had had to swallow from that weak king. To no man had this attempt been more bitter than to Oliver Cromwell. An Englishman of Englishmen, he could fight against his own, but to have a foreign nation take up the struggle aroused all the patriotism he possessed. This fierce resentment of Ireland's interference, together with the fame of his past victories, caused the Council of State to offer to send him to Ireland, with full power to bring that rebellious island to subjection.

"Truly," he said in answer to this offer, "if we do not endeavor to make good our interest there, and that timely, we shall not only have our interests rooted out there, but they will, in a very short time, be able to land forces in England and put us to trouble here; and I confess I have these thoughts with myself that may be carnal and foolish: I had rather

be overrun with a Cavalierish interest than a Scottish interest; had rather be overrun by a Scottish interest than an Irish interest, and, I think of all, this is most dangerous."

This command was given to Cromwell on March 15, 1649, and until the middle of July he was getting his forces ready, putting down mutiny, drilling recruits and filling the hearts of the English soldiers with enthusiastic patriotism. As if these warlike preparations were not enough to try its soul, numberless difficulties were vexing the Council of State in its unaccustomed work of governing,—troubles which in themselves needed all of Oliver Cromwell's faith and energy to smooth over.

Finally, after numerous delays, July 10, the day set for the departure of the army, came. Surrounded by a life guard of eighty men, riding in a coach drawn by six gray horses, and accompanied by many members of Parliament, by the waving of flags and by shouting crowds,

Oliver Cromwell drove out of London toward Wales, where he was to embark for Ireland. The task before him was enough to bring despair to the heart of any man, but despair was unknown to the heart of Oliver Cromwell. He believed that his cause was just; he was carrying out God's plans and had nothing to do with thoughts of failure.

Some English troops stationed at Dublin had kept that city free from invasion, and here Cromwell was received with great rejoicing when he arrived a month later. Here he stayed ten days and then, issuing a proclamation strictly forbidding any soldier in his command to swear, drink, rob, or inflict unnecessary cruelty, left the city for Drogheda. The latter town was garrisoned by twenty-eight hundred men in the service of Charles II, and flaunted defiance in the very face of the English army. Cromwell ordered the garrison to surrender, but the governor of Drogheda refused, and the guns of the English army were immediately planted

outside the city walls. It was never Cromwell's plan to spend time in digging ditches and drawing up lines, but with a mighty



St. Lawrence Gate, Drogheda.

roar his battery belched forth, and a high steeple toppled into the village streets. Another roar, and a high castle tower sent the stones crashing into the neighboring roofs. A third storm of shell, and a breach in the wall was made. Through this the English army marched into Drogheda. Between these powerful volleys, Cromwell had given the Irish opportunities to surrender, but they had refused. Even with the English within their walls, they still refused to yield. The Irish leader,

with three hundred men, took refuge on a huge mound in the center of the town. Enraged at this prolonged resistance, Cromwell ordered that all who were still in arms should be put to death. Before the English swords were sheathed that night two thousand Irish soldiers had been slaughtered. The country was swept with horror and fear as the news went out from Drogheda. What sort of a man was this, whose unyielding will knew no mercy? Ten years before there had been a terrible massacre of the English in Ireland, and now Oliver Cromwell was accused by some of having revenged this through the massacre at Drogheda. Others claimed that he was a monster who had enforced a military law never before enforced by any civilized general,—the law which refuses mercy to an unyielding though conquered garrison. Cromwell's own explanation of the apparently useless and cruel waste of human life was given in a letter to the president of the council at London.

“Truly, I believe, this bitterness will

save much effusion of blood, through the goodness of God," he said. "I wish that all honest hearts may give the glory of



Magdalen Tower at Drogheda.

this to God alone, to whom indeed the praise of this mercy belongs."

The following months justified his belief. There were days of awful struggle; days when the Irish would forget the lesson they had been taught, and would fight with savage fierceness; days of cold,



*The sword
used by
Cromwell
in his Irish
campaign.*

drenching, autumn rains, of sweeping winter winds, of fever and weariness; days when Cromwell's home-loving heart went out in his letters, calling for sympathy from his mother, wife, and children, who were watching and waiting in London. In mid-winter, in place of the longed-for rest, Parliament sent him a vote of thanks, but with the same messenger an urgent desire for greater haste and activity in putting down the rebellion. Scotland was threatening England again, and Cromwell was needed at home.

The final struggle came in the spring of 1650, at Clonmel. The Irish soldiers fought with the grim courage of despair until the night came on, and then far on into the darkness, in a hand to hand struggle. The trenches and fields were strewn with the bodies of the stanch Roundheads. But victory followed the English here as it had throughout the struggle, and Ireland was

forced to accept days of peace and prosperity. Only ten months had passed since Oliver Cromwell had left England, but in that time he had done more to bring the troublesome Irish to terms than had been done in ten years by any English king or queen.

The home government showed their appreciation of this swift victory in the welcome the many soldiers and their general received on their return. While the fighting had been going on Parliament had voted Cromwell's family the use of three London mansions and a grant of land which would yield an income of twelve thousand dollars a year. But it was not until the ragged, wan, but victorious army marched on to English soil, that Cromwell for the first time received a public celebration of his victories. As the stanch general led his troops across the beloved fields of England, in the bright sunshine of the summer day, the bells began to ring, the people set up a mighty shout of welcome, and flags and

banners waved brilliantly in the soft wind.

But the sound of the bells and the shouts of welcome had scarcely died away before the wearied army was receiving commands to defend the northern border. Scotland was threatening daily to invade England as the ally of Charles II. Cromwell reached England the last of May, and in a month was marching his Ironsides into the borderland. Nothing less than the belief that his purpose was inspired by God himself could have given Cromwell the enthusiasm and vigor for a second campaign only four weeks after the awful struggle in Ireland.

CHAPTER XI

The Subjection of the Scotch

BANQUETS, processions, flying flags, and shouting crowds wakened the English countryside from London to Berwick, that summer of 1650, as Cromwell marched northward. The English fleet, loaded with supplies for the army, followed along the eastern coast, adding brilliancy and power to the land troops. On the Scotch-English boundary the army halted to receive a proclamation which urged all to be faithful and courageous, and not to doubt God's blessing and support. Orders were given to put to death any soldier offering violence to the person or property of any unarmed Scotch citizen.

After crossing into Scotland Cromwell had need of all the enthusiastic encouragement of his countrymen, as well as his dauntless faith in his own success. The country from the boundary line to

Edinburgh had been swept bare of all supplies and every able-bodied man had withdrawn to that city to await his



"The English fleet . . . followed along the eastern coast."

coming. Upon reaching the old capital he found himself facing a general—David Leslie—who was as steadily sure of victory as he himself had ever been, and so clever in leadership that for fear of being outwitted Cromwell had need of all his watchfulness. To add to David Leslie's power, the Scotch army was a third larger than that of the English and held a strongly fortified position, with very nearly all of Scotland lying,

full of supplies, off to the north and west.

Encamped before the old city with its cannon-guarded streets stretching from the harbor to the castle topping the rocky height, and with the Scotch general refusing to move from his position, Oliver Cromwell hesitated for the first time in his life. And even now it was not because he so greatly dreaded the cannon, or feared the shrewd general, but that he hoped to win over the whole Scotch army, general and all, to the English cause. The Scotch were Puritans, in a sense, and Cromwell looked upon them as religious brothers. Never before had he stopped in his swift force, but here he wavered, hoping against hope that a battle could be avoided. Through all the month of August this wavering continued. There were skirmishes now and then, as the English army tried to cut off the Scotch supplies; there were many letters and proclamations sent back and forth between the rugged Scotch Presbyterian general and the stern, psalm-singing

Puritan Cromwell, each firmly convinced that the salvation of the other and of his army depended on these letters.

But heavy, drenching rains and the winds and mists of the sea were descending on the poorly fed, poorly housed English soldiers. Disease and weariness began to kill even their devotion to Cromwell and his cause. Hoping to better their condition, the general withdrew them to Dunbar on the first of September. He could have done nothing to please David Leslie and his Scotch army more. To be sure, Cromwell had reached the coast and the English fleet when he encamped on the peninsula near Dunbar, but the food on the ships, the little strip of seacoast, and a weary army were all he could call his after a two months' campaign. Stretched in a semicircle behind him were moors and hills untraversed by any save mountain sheep. Seeing a possible trap for the English army, David Leslie, watchful and steady, marched his army of more than twenty thousand

men—the very flower of Scotland's strength—through the only possible road and encamped at the base of the hills.



The battlefield of Dunbar.

With the sea in front, the wild country at the back, and with an army wearied and numbering barely half that of the Scotch, it looked as if Oliver Cromwell's long series of victories was to end in bitter defeat. Grasping the danger to its fullest extent, the entrapped Ironside leader sent off the following letter with "Haste, haste," written above it:

Dunbar,] 2d September, 1650.

DEAR SIR,— We are upon an Engagement very difficult. The Enemy hath blocked up our way at the Pass at Copperspath, through

which we cannot get without almost a miracle. He lieth so upon the Hills that we know not how to come that way without great difficulty; and our lying here daily consumeth our men, who fall sick beyond imagination. . . . But the only wise God knows what is best. All shall work for Good. Our spirits are comfortable, praised be the Lord,—though our present condition be as it is.

But even while writing this letter, Cromwell was swiftly arraying his army to oppose the enemy, who had left the height to march down to the bank of a brook which marked the boundary of the English camp. All day wild sea wind and rain beat upon the men. Night-fall found the armies grimly facing each other across the little brook and the glen through which the stream ran. All through the cold, wet night the soldiers lay within instant reach of their arms. But while the moon was still shining between the heavy clouds and the first gleam of dawn had just broken, the Scotch

THE SOULDIER'S Pocket Bible :

Containing the most (if not all) those places contained in holy Scripture, which doe shew the qualifications of his inner man, that is a fir Souldier to fight the Lords Battels, both before he fight, in the fight, and after the fight ;

Which Scriptures are reduced to severall heads, and sirly applyed to the Souldiers severall occasions, and so may supply the want of the whole Bible; which a Souldier cannot conveniently carry about him :

And may bee also usefull for any Christian to meditate upon, now in
this miserable time of Warre.

Imprimatur, *Edm. Calamy:*

Jos. 18. This Book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou maist observe to doe according to all that is written therein, for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and have good successe.

Printed at London by G.B. and R.W. for
Aug: 3^d G. C. 1643.

Reproduced from Morley's "Oliver Cromwell" by courtesy of The Century Co.

Title page of the soldier's pocket Bible, a copy of which was carried by every soldier in Cromwell's army.

foot soldiers, cowering under trees and rocks on the storm-swept hillside, heard a shrill bugle cry, a roar of cannon, a cry from a thousand throats, "The Lord of Hosts!" and the English army was across the brook and in their very midst. The first ranks of the Scotch fell back helpless before the swift attack. As the sun rose over the ocean, Cromwell was riding everywhere, shouting:

"Let God arise! Let His enemies be scattered!" and then, "They run!" followed by a psalm of thanksgiving which his Ironsides caught from his lips and repeated as they drove the Scotch back upon their own ranks in utter rout and confusion. Through the passes, back toward Edinburgh, Leslie fled with what was left of his army. The Roundheads followed for eight miles, halting at last with three thousand stanch Scotch lying dead by the way and ten thousand taken prisoner by the shouting Ironsides. Cromwell took no credit to himself for this almost miraculous victory. In a letter

written to Parliament the day after the battle he said:

"We that serve you beg of you not to own us,—but God alone. . . . Relieve the oppressed, hear the groans of poor prisoners in England."

The voice of the Lord General of the English army was still the voice of the Lord of the Fens, the voice of the one who never forgot the poor and oppressed. And on the same day, although he was wearied by the storms, the battle, and the hardships of a long campaign, he wrote to his wife:

Dunbar, 4th September, 1650.

MY DEAREST,— I have not leisure to write much. But I could chide thee that in many of thy Letters thou writest to me, That I should not be unmindful of thee and thy little ones. Truly, if I love you not too well, I think I err not on the other hand much. Thou art dearer to me than any creature; let that suffice.

The Lord hath showed us an exceeding mercy:—who can tell how

great it is! My weak faith hath been upheld. I have been in my inward man marvellously supported;—though I assure thee, I grow an old man, and feel infirmities of age marvellously stealing upon me. . . .

My love to all dear friends. I rest
thine,

OLIVER CROMWELL.

The long, uncertain campaign in Scotland and the danger of invasion from that country, had caused all England to await the result of the struggle in fear and trembling. Because of this anxiety, the rejoicing was deeper, and the gratitude to Cromwell greater than ever before. When the captured Scottish colors reached London they were hung in Westminster Hall—one hundred sixty of them. Even the stern Puritan officials were swayed by the enthusiasm that took England by storm. For the first time in its history the English army was granted a war medal by Parliament. This was called the "Dunbar Medal," and in spite of Cromwell's protests, bore his likeness on one side.

Although the lesson just learned was a severe one, yet Scotland was by no means conquered. Edinburgh Castle fell after a time, and Cromwell took up his residence there; still the stubborn Scots, together with the Cavaliers under Charles II, were skirmishing the country for a new army. There was nothing to do, in the face of this danger, but to stay in the enemy's country. In two years Cromwell had had scarcely a month with his own family, and that month had been filled with preparations for war. The long years of quiet home life at St. Ives and Ely must often have come back to him in this trying time. With all the affectionate memory he was capable of he cried to his wife to write to him oftener. And she, wearied by the months of separation and suspense, wrote from London, where she and his mother watched for his coming:



*Cromwell's
coat of arms.*

[Cockpit, London], 27th Dec., 1650.

MY DEAREST,—I wonder you should blame me for writing no oftener, when

I have sent three for one: I cannot but think they are miscarried. Truly if I know my own heart, I should as soon neglect myself as to [omit]¹ the least thought towards you, who in doing it, I must do it to myself. But when I do write, my Dear, I seldom have any satisfactory answer; which makes me think my writing is slighted

I should rejoice to hear your desire in seeing me; but I desire to submit to the Providence of God; hoping the Lord, who hath separated us, and hath often brought us together again, will in His good time bring us again, to the praise of His name. Truly my life is but half a life in your absence, did not the Lord make it up in Himself, which I must acknowledge to the praise of His grace.

I would you would think to write sometimes to your dear friend my Lord Chief Justice, of whom I have often put you in mind. And truly, my Dear, if you would think of what I put you in mind of some, it might

¹ Word torn out of original manuscript.



ELIZABETH, THE WIFE OF OLIVER CROMWELL
*From a portrait by Sir Peter Lely, reproduced from Morley's
"Oliver Cromwell" by courtesy of The Century Co.
and the Rev. T. Cromwell Bush.*

be to as much purpose as others. . . .

Yours in all faithfulness,

ELIZABETH CROMWELL.

This letter was again the voice of the Elizabeth of Huntingdon and St. Ives, the wife who had advised and guided the abrupt temper of Oliver Cromwell past many difficult places, and who now did not hesitate to remind the Lord General of certain duties he had neglected.

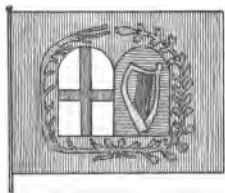
It was no wonder that the swift change from the quiet life led in the shadow of the Ely cathedral to the active, soul-stirring years of his military career had left Cromwell but little time to develop the tact of a diplomatic leader. It was still less to be marveled at that even his mighty strength should begin to feel the wear of the past campaigns. Late in the winter he fell ill and for days wavered between life and death. England looked on in anxious dismay, wondering what would be the end of their trouble if their unconquerable Lord General should die. Down in London the family of Oliver

Cromwell suffered through hours of waiting, unable to reach the man whose tender love and care cried out to them even in his weakness.

"My love to the dear little ones," he wrote of his grandchildren, to his wife; "I pray for grace for them. I thank them for their Letters; let me have them often. . . . Truly I am not able as yet to write much. I am weary."

Although the sick general was able to throw off the more serious illness in the spring, the cold, raw days brought on ague, which lasted for several weeks. All of this time the Scotch were strengthening their army and strongly fortifying themselves at Stirling. By the last of June, however, Cromwell was able to take the field again. His appearance was the signal for victory, and a series of Scotch defeats followed. But the enemy were so safely settled in their camp and so closely in touch with their supplies that Cromwell decided to march around to the rear to cut off the supplies and drive the

Scotch from their position. In a little more than a month he had so successfully carried out this plan that the Scotch not only left their fortifications but were on the march toward England. The English Parliament no sooner received word of this than it sent an army north to oppose them. Cromwell, on his part, hastily concluded his work and marched his men south to overtake



Flag of the Commonwealth.

the Scots. On the first anniversary of the battle of Dunbar the foreign army found itself between the two English divisions, at Worcester, England. Overwhelmed by superior numbers, as well as by the superior training of the Puritans, the Scotch army yielded the crowning victory of the war to the English.

Worcester not only ended the trouble with Scotland, but Cromwell's career as a soldier as well. In nine years he had changed a straggling, dissatisfied body of

men into an army that had carried victory into Ireland and Scotland and brought peace out of civil strife in his own home land. Unlike the other great generals of the world's history, Oliver Cromwell had had no military training in his youth. A quiet farmer-citizen by education and tastes, he had learned to manage troops in the midst of the smoke and noise of battle. By sheer force of character and keenness of mind he worked through the lower ranks steadily but rapidly, learning men, equipment, and military insight as he went. At the same time he was comparing the English army with those of foreign countries, taking the best in all methods of warfare, and after a time going beyond them all in modern ideas of military maneuvers. The result was an army unequaled in all Europe, and more nearly like modern troops than had ever been known.

Would the Lord General of this army, the farmer-soldier, prove as successful in the more delicate affairs of peace?

CHAPTER XII

The Lord General in Affairs of State

IT was April 23, 1653. Since the battle of Worcester England had been clamoring for a settled government. The army had petitioned Cromwell, the people had appealed to him, the Dutch had begun a war that was demanding extra taxes, and still the Rump Parliament sat in the place of power. For twelve years the members of this body had sat there, loving their power but accomplishing nothing.

With long-suffering patience Cromwell had tried to persuade these men either to take hold of England's troubles and straighten them out or to go home. But satisfied with themselves and afraid of losing their positions, they had quietly sat on, refusing to engage actively in anything. As was always characteristic with Oliver Cromwell, he waited until

fully convinced that peaceful measures were useless, and then he struck with a force that shocked all Europe. The climax came this April morning when he marched into the Houses of Parliament, a square-built figure in black, with gray woolen stockings and heavy shoes, attended by only one friend. There was a ring to his step, however, and a settling of the heavy jaw that caused the self-satisfied officials to stiffen themselves in their seats. With no uncertain meaning, his voice rang out above them:

“You have sufficiently deluded the people and provided for your own and your relations’ benefits; possessing these seats under pretense of forming a commonwealth, of reforming the laws and promoting public good, you have imposed on the kingdom, have thrust yourselves and relations into the gainfullest and most honorable offices, only to nourish luxury and impiety.”

Some members cried out in remonstrance, and with that Cromwell took the

final step. A door was thrown suddenly open and a body of soldiers tramped into



Cromwell dismissing the Rump Parliament.

the hall. The members, with but little resistance, filed out before this armed force.

"It's you," Cromwell cried out as they passed, "that have forced me to this. I have sought the Lord night and day, that He would rather slay me than put me upon the doing of this work."

But although Cromwell voiced his own regret in this way, he was sure of England's approval. Except from the members themselves not a single protest came. It was indeed well that it was so, for never in all his vigorous public life had Cromwell faced such a difficulty as now lay before him. Without king or Parliament, England found itself thrown on its own resources. Everything for which the country had suffered was now at stake. Freed from monarchy, from the old constitutional Parliament, could the leaders now establish a government tolerant in politics and religion, broad enough to meet the needs of all classes and shrewd enough to guard against successful attacks of opposing parties? With king and Parliament gone there was but one natural power left; that was the army. The voice and head of the army was Oliver Cromwell.

Realizing that he was unskilled in affairs of state, Cromwell kept himself out of active leadership by appointing a council to take that responsibility. A

new Parliament was selected from men noted for their religious activity. Here Cromwell's feelings got the better of his practical common sense, for this body of men accomplished nothing. Fortunately, the members of this "Praise God Barebones Parliament" soon became convinced that they could not serve England in her need, and dissolved their assembly in December. Again the country found itself with no head but that of the army. For years the people had tried parliaments and councils of state. Now they were convinced that what they needed and wanted was one man at the head of affairs. This man must be fearless, a tireless worker, a shrewd, forceful thinker, and above all one who would work for the swift betterment of England, forgetful of self and friends. All the events in the past troublesome years pointed to Oliver Cromwell as the man who came nearest to having these qualities.

Urged by necessity, the higher officers of the army, with Cromwell's consent,

now drew up a new constitution for England. In this the principal power was given to a Lord Protector. It was understood by all that the Lord General of the army would be Lord Protector of England.



CHAPTER XIII

Lord Protector of All England

ON the afternoon of December 16, 1653, the streets of London leading from Whitehall Palace to old Westminster Hall were crowded with a curious but enthusiastic crowd. This was the day set apart for administering the oath to the new chief officer of England. It was scarcely four years since handsome King Charles had been executed on one of these very streets. The man who had led England to that crisis had since led her through foreign and civil strife to this day. There were hearts in that multitude which were still heavy with grief for the slain king and bitter with anger against the Puritan leader whose power seemed as relentless as it was without bounds. This very unswerving power brought peace or wild enthusiasm to the hearts of others. Surely England's

days of trouble would vanish before this all-victorious man.

At last the gates of Whitehall opened.



"At last the gates of Whitehall opened."

Friends and foes crowded back and down between their ranks passed the glittering array of city officials in scarlet robes, and state coaches with gay outriders, led by Oliver Cromwell, attended by the Lord Mayor and the judges of the city.

Within the dark old hall of Westminster the excitement was even more intense than on the crowded streets, as Cromwell,

clad in a dark rich suit and velvet cloak, stood before them, massive and sturdy in his military bearing. Unyielding strength of will looked forth from every line of his large face, worn by toil and exposure. With bared head he took his place on the left side of the chair of state while the new constitution was read. Following that, his voice rang out clearly and with commanding force in the oath of office:

“I promise, in the presence of God, not to violate or infringe the matters and things contained in the instrument, but to observe and cause the same to be observed, and in all things, to the best of my understanding, govern the nations according to the laws, statutes, and customs; to seek their peace, and cause justice and law to be equally administered.”

He then put on his hat and sat down in the chair, while the great seal of England, the sword and cap of administration, were presented to him. At the close of this ceremony Cromwell led the procession

from the hall, with the Lord Mayor carrying the sword of state before him. The English people had a ruler once more, and for days afterward they expressed their rejoicing in illuminations, processions, and banquetings of great magnificence.

The first act of the Lord Protector was to bring about peace with Holland. This was not a hard matter, for the Dutch had suffered severe losses and were fearful that they might suffer still greater with the dread Cromwell at the head of the English government. This treaty of peace was the beginning of a prosperous, brilliant period of foreign affairs for the island. But within its own borders troubles were constantly arising. Friends of the exiled Charles II, of the old established Church of England, and those favoring more liberty than the new government allowed, continually spread discontent and rebellion throughout the commonwealth. To meet these difficulties Cromwell hastened to summon the Parliament for which the new constitution provided.

Cromwell decided to have the formal assembling of Parliament on September 3. On this day he had won his victories of



Westminster Hall.

Worcester and Dunbar, and now he decided to make it still more a day of thanksgiving for England. On Saturday, September 2, Cromwell went in state down the Thames River to Westminster Hall, where he issued an invitation to the new Parliament to attend church the next day. London, and in fact all England, rubbed their eyes in amazement over the picturesque magnificence of that Puritan Sunday nearly three hundred years ago. Instead of the former simplicity and scorn

for ceremony and elegance which Cromwell had always shown, about nine in the morning, the London crowds saw him come forth from the gates of Whitehall in a coach, attended by pages, members of council, master of ceremonies, and officers of the life guards. Following them came a procession of coaches carrying the city and national officials in full uniform, with a troop of Cromwell's own sturdy Ironsides clanking in the rear.

If the procession appeared brilliant in the September sunlight, it flashed even more gayly against the dark walls of the abbey church as Cromwell marched down the dim aisle. After the morning services were concluded the procession was led to the painted chamber, where Cromwell, sitting in the chair of state, spoke to the new members, telling them of the great things already accomplished by the new government and what greater things remained for them to do. It was here that Oliver Cromwell showed his first great skill in public address. Not mentioning

the troubles, which he knew were only too numerous, he gave the new Parliament to understand that it was expected to heal and settle all difficulties.

CHAPTER XIV

The Uncrowned King

BUT, alas for the Lord Protector's expectations! Not only did the new Parliament neglect to settle many old troubles, but immediately began raising objections to all new measures which Cromwell submitted. Among the first of these was a measure to decide whether the new law-making power should be in the hands of the chief ruler or of Parliament. This hesitation showed not only a disloyalty to Cromwell but a distrust in the new government that aroused discontent and suspicion in all England. After eight days of quarreling Cromwell descended upon Parliament in great wrath. In spite of his indignant anger, however, weariness and disappointment must have been uppermost in his heart. After defending himself and telling of his service in the army, he said:

"I hoped to have had leave to retire to a private life. I begged to be dismissed of my charge; I begged it again and again;—and God be Judge between me and all men if I lie in this matter! . . . But I could not obtain what my soul longed for."

Although this had been Cromwell's request and was probably what his former soul really most wanted, now that England needed him, now that he was the only man to do the work that needed to be done, he did not shirk his task. He informed the members that the same constitution that made them a Parliament made him Protector; they could not do away with one without doing away with the other. He talked so persuasively that the trouble was at last partly smoothed over. But Parliament constantly kept putting forth its own power, or attempting to do so, without accomplishing anything except to weaken Cromwell's efforts wherever possible.

In the midst of all this endless bickering,

when the heart of the Lord Protector was sick with fear for his loved Puritan England, a day of quiet sorrow came to Whitehall Palace.

Oliver Cromwell had kept all his love of home fresh in his heart, in the face of the troubles of war and government. Scarcely a day passed that he did not dine or sup with his family, and in all these years of tireless labor he had never failed to go to his mother's room at night for her help and comfort. And now that mother, wearied with her ninety-four years, and worn with the public life about her, lay dying in the home of her son. The courage she had felt for him in his young days had been replaced in the last years by fear for his safety. Instead of the life of long ago when he had gone forth to his quiet fields at peace with all the world, she had come to see him arm himself against secret foes and never leave his own household without guards before and behind him. For years she had not heard the sound of a gun without

fearing that his life had been taken. Now, however, her mind went back to the earlier days and to the faith in her son's cause. A little before her death she called him to her. He was no longer the stern Puritan leader of England's commonwealth, but plain Oliver Cromwell, stanch in his years of loyal love to his mother. With her hands upon his bowed head, she gave him her last blessing:

"The Lord cause His face to shine upon you; and comfort you in all your adversities; and enable you to do great things for the glory of your Most High God, and to be a relief unto His People. My dear Son, I leave my heart with thee. A good night!"

As deeply affectionate as Cromwell was, he could give but a few hours to the memory of his mother. The new Parliament was going on its way, paying no attention to the Lord Protector and having no communication with him whatever. According to the constitution, the members could hold their seats for five

months. Cromwell waited impatiently until he could legally dissolve them, and then appeared in their midst like an avenging angel.

“I do not know what you have been



The seal of the Protectorate.

doing!” he cried indignantly. “I do not know whether you have been alive or dead. I have not once heard from you all this time; . . . and that you all know. . . . I have troubled you with a long Speech; and I believe it may not have the same resentment with all that it hath with some. But because that is unknown to me, I shall leave it to God;—and conclude with this: That I think myself bound, as in my duty to God, and to the People of these Nations for their safety

and good in every respect,—I think it my duty to tell you that it is not for the profit of these Nations, nor for common and public good, for you to continue here any longer. And therefore I do declare unto you, That I do dissolve this Parliament.”

It was decidedly apparent to all England by this time that the Lord Protector meant to live up to his title. Beginning with this demolishing blow against Parliament, his enthusiasm was kept vigorously active all the winter and spring of 1655. There were uprisings of Royalists, disagreements among the Puritans, and general discontent with the government. But no plot, no uprising could go very far with the heavy-lidded eyes of Oliver Cromwell constantly sweeping the island from border to border. With no Parliament to thwart his will, he voted supplies; levied troops and kept them in readiness throughout the country; dismissed officials, and reached out over all Europe, wherever the interests of Englishmen were at stake.

England submitted to this protecting power with fair grace, for never in her history had she stood so well with other nations. Whatever his methods, Cromwell's whole purpose was, first and last, to lead his country out of the tangle and oppression of years to a higher and better national life. With keenness to detect the qualities necessary in a statesman, he surrounded himself with the most able men of his time. Poets, ministers, and lawyers, as well as trained diplomats, were called upon to give their best time and strength for England's service. Many of the old friends who had served him so well in his earlier struggles were not capable of serving Cromwell now. Gradually he was forced to discard many of them, and as the years passed he found himself more and more alone.

Perhaps the one thing which gave Cromwell the power to face the world with such untiring strength was the life he led outside the public view. So far as it was possible, he kept his home life

as it had always been, full of tender, watchful care. Stern old Puritan that he was, he was still capable of enjoying a joke, and his laugh was like the boisterous outbreak of a boy. It was quite possible for him to put aside the most pressing cares of state to go off on a day's excursion to the country. The tastes formed away back at Sidney Sussex had grown also, and music and good horses gave him his greatest pleasures.

*Seal for State papers.*

With all this ability to throw off his cares and rest, Cromwell must have had but few minutes in the summer of 1655 to call his own. In connection with the dissension at home a quarrel with Spain had been growing steadily, until now it developed into a foreign war. A fleet had been sent to the Spanish colonies in the West Indies during the spring months and had failed because of lack of food and arms. In the face of this disaster Cromwell found himself before an

almost overwhelming difficulty in raising money. In despair, he finally called another Parliament. This body met for the first time in September. The next month the English navy won a great victory off the Spanish coast. For a time all disagreements were forgotten in the general rejoicing. The victory brought with it not only a turn in English foreign affairs, but a tremendous amount of silver plate into the country itself. This was brought directly home, and in early November the city of London saw thirty-eight wagons of silver go trundling through its streets to the tower to be converted into English coin.

This success did much toward straightening out the difficulties between Cromwell and the new Parliament. A time of thanksgiving spread over England, and for a short period the nation once more recognized her debt of gratitude to Oliver Cromwell. About two months later, in January, 1657, this wave of loyalty was increased by an attempt to assassinate the

Lord Protector. Several similar attempts had been made before, but this attempt was so bold and so far-reaching that the country arose in indignation. The plot, in which Whitehall was to be burned and Cromwell killed in the flames, was so well concealed that it was not until the fuse had been lighted that the alarm was given. When Parliament heard the news it adjourned for a week in order to investigate the scheme more thoroughly. When it assembled again it appointed a day of national thanksgiving, and voted to wait upon the Lord Protector in a body and formally congratulate him on his escape.

But much more to Cromwell than all this rejoicing, feasting, and making of holidays was the opportunity which this time gave him for wielding his power unmolested, for England's benefit. In the admiration which Parliament felt for Cromwell the members offered him the title of king. He was wise enough to refuse the title; he already had the

power of a king. The ceremonies and homage of such an office he had always detested, and his experience as chief ruler had not changed these tastes. He seized upon this opportunity, however, to make his title of Lord Protector more secure. This title had never been legally recognized by the entire nation as that of their chief ruler, although Cromwell had left no doubt that he filled the office. Now an act was passed adopting the title and offering it, formally, to Cromwell.

On January 26, 1657, Cromwell, surrounded by brilliantly dressed officials, again took his place in Westminster Hall before the assembled Parliament to receive his formal inauguration. Upon a lower step stood three high nobles with drawn swords, while the speaker of the House addressed the man upon whom all eyes were turned.

“May it please your Highness, you are now upon a great theatre in a large concourse of people; you have the Parliament of England, Scotland and Ireland before

you; on your right hand my lords, the judges, and on your left hand the Lord Mayor, aldermen and sheriffs of London,



The second installation of Cromwell as Lord Protector.

the most notable and populous city of England. The Parliament, with the interposition of your suffrage, makes laws; and the judges and governors of London are the dispensers of these laws to the people.

“The occasion of the great convention and intercourse is to give an investiture to your Highness in that eminent place of Lord Protector: a name which you

had before, but it is now settled by the unanimous consent of the people of these three nations assembled in Parliament. You have no new name, but a new date added to the old name; the 16th of December is now changed to the 26th of June. I am commanded by the Parliament to make oblation to your Highness of four things in order to this inauguration."

The "four things" were a robe of purple velvet trimmed with ermine, a Bible, a sword, and a scepter. After presenting these the speaker went on to explain the significance of each:

"First. The robe of purple, this is an emblem of magistracy and imports righteousness and justice. When you have put on this vestment I may say you are a grown man. This robe is of a mixed color, to show mixture of justice and mercy.

"Second. The Bible is a Book that contains the Holy Scriptures, in which you have the happiness to be well overfed . . . it doth contain both precepts and examples of good government.

“Third. Here is a scepter, not unlike a staff; for you are to be the staff of the weak and the poor; it is of ancient use in this kind. It’s said in Scripture that the scepter shall not depart from Judah. It was of use in other kingdoms. . . .

“Fourth. The last thing is the sword, not a military but a civil sword; it is a sword rather of defense than offense; not to defend your life only, but others also.” . . .

Several high officers stepped forward at the close of this explanation and put the velvet robe on Cromwell, girded the sword to his belt, and placed the scepter in one hand and the Bible in the other. Wearing these symbols of his office, he repeated the following oath:

“I do, in the presence and by the name of almighty God, promise and swear that, to the uttermost of my power, I will uphold and maintain the true Reformed Protestant Christian Religion in the purity thereof, as it is contained in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament,

and encourage the profession and professors of the same; and that to the uttermost of my power I will endeavor, as Chief Magistrate of these three nations, the maintenance and preservation of the peace and safety and just rights and privileges of the people thereof; and shall in all things, according to our best knowledge and power, govern the people of these three nations, according to law."

The oath was followed by a prayer, after which the heralds sounded their trumpets, proclaiming his Highness Protector of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the dominions belonging thereto. A second time the trumpets blazoned forth the announcement, and the people answered with loud cries of, "God save the Lord Protector!"

For a time this demonstration of loyalty carried everything before it, and Cromwell enjoyed a few months of real support from Parliament. But whether the members tired of the strict supervision of Cromwell as Lord Protector, or whether some new

members brought a quarrelsome element among them, it is hard to say, but it was only a little while until the trouble broke forth in all its old-time bitterness. Going from bad to worse, the members finally made themselves so obnoxious that Cromwell one day informed them that it was to his interest as well as to that of England that they go home.

"I can say," he said sorrowfully and earnestly, "in the presence of God, in comparison with whom we are but like poor creeping ants upon the earth,—I would have been glad to have lived under my woodside, to have kept a flock of sheep, rather than undertaken such a Government as this. But undertaking it by the Advice and Petition of you, I did look that you who had offered it unto me should make it good."

Again Cromwell stood at the head of the English government alone. In June, 1658, the Spaniards were gloriously beaten. With victories abroad and the Lord Protector standing invincible before the eyes

of foreign nations, England recognized that Oliver Cromwell had lost none of his power; that he was in deed and in truth Lord High Protector of the island.



CHAPTER XV

A Last Great Victory

BEFORE the days of rejoicing over the Spanish victories had passed, even before the foreign ambassadors had completed their congratulations and carried their glittering processions out of sight down the London streets, the home of Oliver Cromwell was turned into a home of suffering and sorrow. The Protector's favorite daughter, Elizabeth, the member of the family most beloved by the English nation, had been taken ill while yet the banqueting and the brilliancy of the decorations made the summer home of Cromwell at Hampton Court anything but a place of rest. She suffered exceedingly through the month of July, and the stanch old Ironside, who in his long campaigns had faced entire fields of dead and dying without a quiver, was unable to think of public duties; national disgrace or

triumph was all one to him as he watched Elizabeth's strength grow gradually less and her suffering more intense, until death put an end to the struggle.



The great gate, Hampton Court.

Oliver Cromwell was never himself after the death of Elizabeth. In the spring preceding his daughter's sickness his twenty years of never-ending toil, danger, and disappointment had begun to tell on his

almost unlimited strength. A few days after her death he called for his Bible and had the following passage read:

"I can do all things, through Christ which strengtheneth me."

"Ah," he said, "this Scripture did once save my life; when my eldest Son died; which went as a dagger to my heart, indeed it did."

He stayed several days at Hampton Court and then, his condition becoming alarming, he was hurried down to London. All loyal hearts in England were turned with anxious thoughts toward Whitehall Palace. Even those who had opposed him recognized the nobleness of his purpose and joined in public and private prayers for the recovery of the Lord High Protector. On Monday, August 30, a great storm swept over the entire island. That night, while the wind and rain had their will in the streets of London, and beat without mercy against the walls of Whitehall Palace, Oliver Cromwell made his last peace:

“Lord, though I am a miserable and wretched creature, I am in Covenant with Thee through grace. And I may, I will, come to Thee, for Thy People. Thou hast made me, though very unworthy, a mean instrument to do them some good, and Thee service; and many of them have set too high a value upon me, though others wish and would be glad

of my death; Lord, however Thou do dispose of me, continue and go on to do good for them. Give them consistency of judg-



*Death mask of
Cromwell.*

ment, one heart, and mutual love; and go on to deliver them, . . . and make the Name of Christ glorious in the world. Teach those who look too much on Thy instruments, to depend more upon Thyself. Pardon such as desire to trample

upon the dust of a poor worm, for they are Thy People too. And pardon the folly of this short Prayer:—Even for Jesus Christ's sake. And give us a good night, if it be Thy pleasure. Amen."

Many thought that night would be his last, but he lived on for four days, muttering brokenly to himself, "God is good."

At one time he was offered a drink, but pushing it aside he said wearily:

"It is not my design to drink or sleep;

but my design is, to make what haste I can to be gone."

On Friday afternoon, September 3, his prayer was heard, and peace came to him at last. He had fought the great battles of Worcester and Dunbar on the third of September; he had called the great triumphal first Parliament of his beloved commonwealth on the same day; he had often called it the greatest day of his life. Perhaps no one of the three had brought his faithful heart so nearly its desire as the one which brought him rest from all earthly victories.

A Chronology of the Life of Oliver Cromwell

AGE	DATE	EVENT
..	1599	Cromwell born at Huntingdon, England.
17	1616	Enters Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge.
18	1617	Father dies and Cromwell leaves college to help his mother in caring for the family.
21	1620	Marries Elizabeth Bourchier, at St. Giles Church, Cripplegate, London.
29	1628	Elected from Huntingdon to represent the people in the House of Commons.
32	1631	Moves from Huntingdon to a farm near St. Ives.
38	1637	Moves from St. Ives to Ely, where he has a position as tithe collector.
39	1638	Defends the rights of the poor people in their claim to the Fenlands.
40	1639	Robert Cromwell, Oliver Cromwell's eldest son, dies at Felsted.
41	1640	Cromwell is elected member of Parliament from Cambridge.
43	1642	Cromwell's troops, which he has collected and drilled at Ely, claim equal victory with the king's forces at Edgehill.
44	1643	Cromwell is made colonel in the Puritan army and subdues the shires of the Fen country.

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AGE	DATE	EVENT
45	1644	Oliver Cromwell, Cromwell's second son, dies of smallpox in a war camp. Cromwell wins victory of Marston Moor.
46	1645	Insists on a reorganization of the Puritan forces, and the New Model Army is formed. Cromwell's troops aid in the victory of Naseby, which ends the first civil war.
49	1648	Cromwell is given his first independent command in the second civil war, and closes the war with victory at Preston.
50	1649	Charles I beheaded; Cromwell is made member of the new Council of State. Appointed commander of the army which invades Ireland and wins the hard-fought siege of Drogheda.
51	1650	Closes the Irish campaign with victory at Clonmel. Takes his army to Scotland. Wins victory in the battle of Dunbar.
52	1651	Closes the campaign in Scotland with victory at Worcester, England.
54	1653	The Rump Parliament is dismissed, and Cromwell is made Lord High Protector of England.
58	1657	Parliament offers Cromwell the title of king, which he refuses.
59	1658	Elizabeth, Cromwell's favorite daughter, dies, August 6. Death of Cromwell, September 3.

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